“But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” (Hebrews 3:6)

The Gospel of the Kingdom, Matthew 24:14 | The Shayne Moses Project.

AND THIS GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM SHALL BE PREACHED IN ALL THE WORLD FOR A WITNESS UNTO ALL NATIONS; AND THEN SHALL THE END COME. (MATTHEW 24:14)

“And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that **I** shew **thee**,...”

The 3 Stages of Christ's Kingdom~Church~Bride

Excerpts of works by ***Elders Fred G. Stevenson***, ***F. L. DuPont***, ***J. R. Graves***, ***L. L. Clover***, ***G. E. Jones*** and ***C. A. Smith***, etc.

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~ *Dedication* ~

To the greatest little saint I was ever so privileged to have known: my maiden aunt,
Edith Colene Moses
(1939—2015)

~ ~ ~

Foreword

"Divine prophecies being of the nature of their Author, with whom a thousand years are but as one day, are not therefore fulfilled punctually at once, but have springing and germinant accomplishment, though the height-fulness of them may refer to some one age."-- Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626) [The Advancement of Learning, 2.3]

"All the passages which seem to teach a future kingdom very likely refer to the heavenly phase of the kingdom when Jesus shall turn the kingdom over to the Father."-- Ben M. Bogard (1868 – 1951) [52 Doctrinal Lessons, 29.19]

¶ And he said, So is the kingdome of God, as if a man should cast seede into the ground, And should sleepe, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring, and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth foorth fruite of herselfe, first the blade, then the eare, after that the full corne in the eare. But when the fruite is brought foorth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. ~ Mark 4:26-29

Preface

We all have a physical and spiritual dualism (body and soul) which can also be more finely described as body, mind and soul or spirit; just so the degrees of salvation or eternal life can be differentiated 1st & 2nd degree in the broader, more general sense and 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the finer sense; rightly dividing Scripture. Coinciding with the three stages of the kingdom; or even the areas of the tabernacle/temple *i.e.,* court/porch, holy, and holy of holies. So as the old saying goes: We **have been saved** from the ***penalty*** of sin through Christ's death on Calvary. We **are being saved** from the ***power*** of sin through Christ's work for us now at the right hand of the Father. We **shall be saved** from the ***presence*** of sin through Christ's coming for us.

The Kingdom of our dear LORD has a "trinity of fulfillment" in three stages, phases, parts or dominions; typified, initially by Moses giving the Law and setting up the Tabernacle, Joshua leading the Chosen into the Promised Land and Solomon building the Temple. Also in the three anointings of King David, the three agriculture-related pilgrimage festivals of Israel, and culminating in the three resurrections. This is realized in the offices of our founding Prophet, presiding High Priest and soon to return conquering King of kings: the LORD JESUS CHRIST. The Holy Ghost officiating as the Angel of His presence, Comforter, Guide and Witness; Authorizing each successive, occupying church since Christ in perpetuity comprizing this present kingdom stage. Antichrist has stages also. The Jewish root is to be our "First Love" and preaching the "Gospel of the Kingdom" our "first works" "hasting unto the" next and final stage: the millennial reign of their Messiah and our Lord Christ! ~ [Ge 9:27; Ex 14:19; 19:6; 23:14-17,20-21; 33:14; 1Sa 16:13; 2Sa 2:4; 5:3; Psalm 22:30; 72:16; Pro 9:10; Ecc 3:1; Isa 2:1-4; 9:7; 11:2; 26:2,19; 32:15-18; 42:1-4; 60:22; 61:1; 63:7-16; Eze 17:22-24; 47:1-4; Dan 2:35; 9:24; Zechariah 3:2, 9; 4:2-10; 6:12-13; Mt 3:10-13; 4:14-16; 12:17-21; 13:33; 16:16-19; 18:17-20; 21:43; 27:51-54; 28:18-20; Mk 4:26-29; Luke 12:32; 19:13; John 1:31-34; 3:3-8; 7:37-39; 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7; 20:20-23; Ac 1:5-8; 2:1-4,14-42; 7:38; 8:14-17; 10:44-48; 15:7-8, 14-17; Ro 1:16; 11:17; 1Co 12:11-14; 15:20-28; 2Corinthians 11:1-2; Ga 4:26-27; Eph 1:3-6; 2:6,19-22; Php 3:20-21; Col 1:13; 1Th 4:14-17; He 9:23-28; 12:22-25; 13:10-16; James 5:7-8; 1Pe 2:9-10; 2Pe 1:11; 3:12; 1Jo 2:1, 20, 27; 3:3; 4:1-6; 5:6-9; Re 1:20; 2:4-5; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6; 6:9-11; 14:13-19; 20:1-15; 21:27; 22:3]

Introduction:
KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

From Dr. Fred G. Stevenson's **Direct Answers to Difficult Questions**

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. -(Matthew 16:13-20)

"In what sense were the keys of the kingdom given to Peter? Was it the giving of authority to establish the Samaritan and the Gentile churches? Do the true churches have these keys? How much authority do the keys give to the church?"

One of the very complicated and much discussed subjects of the Bible is the question of just what the kingdom of God (or the kingdom of Heaven) is. The view is taken here that there is no distinction to be made between the two. "The kingdom of Heaven" is an expression peculiar to Matthew. The other gospels call the same body "the kingdom of God." Scofield destroys his own evidence of a distinction between the two.

The kingdom is ultimately righteous men under Christ ruling the world in righteousness. This is to say it is the Millennial reign. But there are various steps or stages in the development of the kingdom before we come to the Millennium. This is where we must do some careful discerning to rightly arrive at the truth. The matter of multiplying kingdoms in the Bible does much to confuse the real issues, but it does nothing to clarify these issues. There has never been but one so far as the kingdom of God is concerned.

Let us note some steps in the development of the kingdom idea:

(1) At Genesis 12:2, Abram is told that the Lord will make of him a great nation. At Genesis 17:6, Abraham is told that kings would come out of him. At II Samuel 7:16 David is told that his house and his kingdom is to be established forever. All of these promises are unconditional, but the time and circumstances of their fulfillment are conditional. This fact gives leeway for the steps enumerated in the following matter.

(2) To Israel coming out of Egypt, the kingdom would have been a good land flowing with milk and honey if they had walked with the Lord in obedience and faith (Exodus 3:7-8; Joshua 1:2-5). It seems to me the failures of the people kept the kingdom from being established at this time.

(3) To the Jews in Jesus' day, the kingdom would have meant personal salvation and the inner circle in the church (Matthew 10:5-6). Here Jesus was not telling the apostles to

abandon the Samaritans and the Gentiles to Hell; but, He was telling them to devote their energies to rallying the Jews to the church and kingdom cause at that particular and crucial time. From the beginning Jesus intended for the Samaritans and the Gentiles to have salvation and a position in the church, but it was to be after the Jews had made their decision as to Jesus and the church.

(4) Thus, to the Gentiles the kingdom message would have brought a more abundant salvation (Mark 7:24-30), and it would have brought them into the church, where there is equality. But the church would still have been built around a nucleus of Israelites. In a way, it would have been much as it will be in the Millennium, with Israel serving as a great force for the evangelization of the world (Zechariah 8:22-23). Here, however, we are on the verge of going beyond what is written, so let us stop.

(5) To all who will meet the terms of the gospel today (the so-called Gentile church period) the kingdom message means salvation, and the knowledge, assurance, joy, and hope of that salvation (Romans 14:17). See also I John 5:13, which teaches that there is to be a knowledge of salvation to those who walk according to the New Testament rule in the church relationship.

(6) To Israel in the Millennium, the kingdom of God will be the inheritance of a good land (Isaiah 11:6-9). To them it will mean universal salvation at that time (Romans 11:26). Multitudes of other nations will also be saved and worship the Lord in truth (Zechariah 8:23).

(7) To the glorified church in the Millennium, the kingdom of God will mean their ruling with Christ during the thousand years (Matthew 19:28).

Now let us turn our attention to the subject of the circumstances of the giving of the keys of the kingdom of God.

The story is aptly summed up in the statement from John 1:11, ***"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."*** Those who received him not were the Jews.

(1) After Jesus began His public ministry, He went to the first Passover, which was held in Jerusalem. There He found that the Jewish religious authorities had turned the house of God into a den of thieves (John 2:13-18). He drove out those who were defiling the temple, hoping the Jews would see that He was the Messiah who was to come. Instead, they challenged His right to do what He had done. He went back to Galilee with a burdened heart because of the rebuff He had received from His brethren. He remained there and ministered to the common people for another year.

(2) He went back to Jerusalem to the Passover the next year. There He found the paralyzed man lying at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-16). Bethesda means in the Hebrew tongue "House of Mercy." The man, utterly helpless, aptly pictured the spiritual, political, and economic condition of the Jewish people at the time, as they were in religious apostasy, and were in bondage to the Roman Empire. Jesus healed the hopelessly afflicted man to show the Jews He would heal them as individuals and as a nation if they would accept Him. They accused Him of breaking the law of Moses in that He healed the man on the Sabbath day. They did not understand that the Sabbath was meant to point them to the time when they would have rest in the Messiah from all their ills as a nation and as individuals. He went back to Galilee and ministered to the common people for another year. But there was a difference this

time. He began to talk less and less about the kingdom of the Jews and He talked more and more about the church and the church age.

(3) According to the harmony of the gospels, Jesus ordained the twelve apostles during this year (Matthew 10:2-4; Luke 6:12-17). And, apparently, immediately afterwards, He preached the Sermon on the Mount, which is the great initiatory sermon to the church. He did many works of healing during this year, and He taught the masses of the people constantly.

(4) Some authorities believe Jesus did not go to the Passover the third year of His ministry. They believe at the time the feast was being celebrated in Jerusalem, Jesus was away to the north on the border of the Gentile world preaching the sermon on the bread of life. As soon as the feast was over, the religious leaders from Jerusalem came seeking Jesus (Mark 7:1-6). During this time, Jesus healed the Gentile daughter of the Syrophenician woman. He began to talk about the church and the Gentile church age (Matthew 16:13-28). It was at this time that He gave the keys of the kingdom to Peter (Matthew 16:19).

Now let us talk briefly about the giving of the keys of the kingdom of Heaven:

(1) The keys of the kingdom were given to Peter (Matthew 16:19) merely as a spokesman, an apostle, and a representative member of the church. Notice that Jesus addressed the whole group of disciples (Matthew 16:13). It was only because Peter was quicker to answer than the others that Jesus then addressed him individually. I, for one, am not strong on "apostolic authority" except such as inheres in an ordained preacher of today.

(2) The keys of the kingdom were really given to the church as such (Matthew 18:17-19; John 20:22-23; Acts 1:8).

The keys of the kingdom of Heaven are given into the hands of the real churches of Jesus. They give power and authority to bind and loose in the church relationship. What the church binds and looses becomes effective only as they act within the letter and the spirit of the Scriptures. At Matthew 18:17-18, the binding and loosing that are done in Heaven are expressed in the future perfect tense in the Greek text, indicating that the Lord does His binding and loosing before the church gets its binding and loosing done. This suggests to us that the Lord's church roll might be pretty widely variant from ours sometimes.

The binding by the church involves exactly what is involved in the great commission given at Matthew 28:19-20. The loosing by the church is the same as that at Matthew 18:17-18.

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND PERPETUATION OF A KINGDOM: *by F. L. DuPont.*

Excerpt from ***Part One*** *of:* THE ORIGIN AND PERPETUITY OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST, "**It's ORIGIN**," -- **chps. VI-X**, *circa 1881-1901 A.D.*

We shall now proceed to the discussion of the subject, as it is presented in the Scriptures. The phrase "kingdom of God," or "kingdom of heaven," is used in several senses in the Bible: to indicate:

1. God's universal empire. Ps. 103:19; cf. 1 Chronicles 29:10-12, et al.

2. The ancient commonwealth of Israel, is called the "kingdom of the Lord." 2 Chronicles 13:8. This kingdom was organized under the immediate direction of Moses, as a political power among the nations of the earth, and was composed of all the members of national Israel, the regenerated as well as the unregenerated.

3. The ultimate residence of the people of God, and the triumphant and glorious reign of Christ as their King. 2 Timothy 4:18; Matthew 7:21; 8:11; 25:31-34; Acts 14:22; 1 Corinthians 15:49-50, [and]

4. This phrase "kingdom of God," and "kingdom of heaven," also refers to the spiritual government organized by the Lord Jesus Christ, during His personal ministry on earth.

As Supreme King and Lawgiver, He has given to His subjects all laws, rules and regulations, necessary for their government. It is to this last application and use of the term "**kingdom**," as found in the Sacred volume, to which we now desire to direct the reader's attention. Our next argument is therefore based upon those Scriptures which represent:

The Organization of the Church of Christ, Under the Form of "the Setting Up" or Establishment of a Kingdom.

Let it be borne in mind in the consideration of this argument, that in the beginning, the Church at Jerusalem and the Kingdom were co-extensive, but after the organization of other churches, the kingdom became enlarged to the extent of embracing all those churches within its boundaries, and so today, the Kingdom of Christ embraces all of the Churches of Christ, no more, and no less.

Prophecies Relating to the "Setting Up" of this Kingdom.

"**And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.**" Daniel 2:44.

Notice: that the prophet foretells—

1. That a kingdom shall be ***"set up."*** Then this kingdom had not been in existence before. It was not a kingdom ***"restored,"*** but ***"set up,"*** established, founded— something entirely ***new*** and ***distinct*** from all others.

2. The ***"God of heaven"*** was to do this work, not some man, or set of men.

3. It was to be . . . . . "**set up**. . . . . **in the days of these kings.**" By reference to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, and its interpretation by Daniel, it will be seen, that there were four great empires to follow each other in regular succession. These empires were: (1) The Babylonian. (2) The Medo-Persian. (3) The Macedonian. (4) The Roman Empire, as we learn from the pages of history. It was in the days of these Roman Emperors, as all biblical scholars are agreed, that this kingdom was to be founded.*

4. It was to "break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms" and it was to "stand for ever."

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* Dr. Harry Rimmer, studying prophecy, in 1939 and correctly discerning the outcome of that war stated in *The Shadow of Coming Events ~ The Coming League and the Roman Dream:* "**We cannot insist upon fitting the Roman Empire into Daniel's picture, and leave out the Byzantine Empire or the equally extensive Dominion of the Sassanids. The latter reigned over an expanse as great as the largest realm of Imperial Rome.** ... It is to be noted that while Persia and Greece are thus definitely named and portrayed in their prophetic rise, **Rome is never once named in all of the prophecies of the entire Old Testament!** Therefore, any attempt to identify her as fulfilling any prophecy which is yet unfilled must be purely the result of human deduction and therefore subject to error. Please check on this statement, and you will see that Daniel does name Media, Persia and Greece, but never Rome."

Fulfillment of this Prophecy.

1. Did the "**God of heaven**" appear on the earth at this time?

"**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.**" John 1:1-14. "**Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever,**" Romans 9:5. "**And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh,**" etc., 1 Timothy 3:16. "**But unto the Son, *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* forever and ever.**" etc., Hebrews 1:8. "**This is the true God, and eternal life,**" 1 John 5:20, et mul al. Thus it is shown, that Jesus Christ, was the "God of heaven," our Campbellite and Unitarian friends to the contrary, notwithstanding.

2. Did the God of heaven "**set up a kingdom**," at this time? Proofs: What did John the Baptist say at the beginning of his ministry? "Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is ***at hand,***" Matthew 3:2.

What did Jesus say at the commencement of His ministry? "**Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**" Matthew 4:17.

a. When did Jesus begin to preach? After His baptism and temptation, and just after John was cast into prison, Matthew 3:16; 4:1, 12, 17.

b. What did he say about the "kingdom" at that time? That it was "***at hand.***"

c. What did He mean by the expression, "at hand?" Near by, close, in reference to time. This is the meaning of *enggike,* everywhere in the New Testament, when used with reference to time; as, "behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners," Matthew 26:45-46; Luke 21:8, 20, 28; Romans 10:8, *et mul at.*

d. Was this the "kingdom of grace?" No, for that kingdom had been in existence thousands of years—ever since the days of Abel, at least.

What Statement did Jesus make Concerning this Kingdom?

"**The law and the prophets *were* until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.**" Luke 16:16.

1. Logical Statement.

a. What was ***"until"*** John? The "law and the prophets."

b. When was John? Just before Christ.

c. What was ***"since"*** John? The "kingdom of God."

d. Therefore, this kingdom of God did not exist prior to John, or during the ministry of John, it was ***"since"*** John.

"Hilaire Belloc, Bishop Fulton Sheen, Gregory Palamus of Thessalonica, Vernon Richards, Sir Robert Anderson, Cyril of Jerusalem, Sophronius the Patriarch of Jerusalem (560-638), Maximus The Confessor (580-662), John of Damascus (676-749), Eulogius of Cordova, Paul Alvarus, the Martyrs of Cordova, John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards the great American Revivalist **all saw Islam as playing the major role in the End-Times.** These and many others simply focused on the literal proclamations in the Bible – as we have done for several years in our book..." So, this does not contradict what the Bible says that "**in the days of these kings**" Christ's kingdom was founded, but now in these later times many more do say like Walid & Richardson: "The fourth kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's dream represents the various manifestations of the Islamic Empire that existed for over thirteen hundred years, culminating in the Ottoman Empire. This Empire was essentially fatally wounded in 1924 with the abolition of the Caliphate and the division and colonization of the Middle East by the Western powers. The fifth empire of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream represents the revival of the Islamic Empire we are presently seeing arise in factions before our very eyes." ~ ***God's War On Terror ~ Islam, Prophecy And The Bible*** by **Walid Shoebat** with **Joel Richardson**. Cf. below on ... *Anti-Christ's Kingdom.*

2. Logical Statement.

a. The "kingdom of God" spoken of here, is something entirely different and distinct, from the "law and the prophets."

b. Men were saved during the dispensation of the "law and the prophets."

c. Men were saved during the dispensation of the "law and prophets," by entering the "kingdom of grace."

d. Therefore, this "kingdom of God" spoken of here, is something distinct from the "kingdom of grace," or salvation.

3. Logical Statement.

a. Note the fact, that the "kingdom of God" is preached. It is here, men hear and know of it.

b. Those who hear and heed the preaching, enter it.

c. Therefore, it must have had a visible and tangible existence, else men could not have entered it.

First Syllogism.

(a) The "kingdom of God" was preached ***since*** the days of John, and men entered it.

(b) The "God of heaven" was to set up or establish a kingdom, and Jesus Christ is the God of heaven.

(c) Therefore, the kingdom of God was set up, established, or organized by Jesus Christ.

Second Syllogism.

(a) Entrance into an organization can be effected only, when such an organization exists.

(b) Men entered the kingdom in Christ's day,—before Pentecost.

(c) Therefore, the kingdom existed in Christ's day,—before Pentecost.

The Kingdom Suffered Violence in the Days of Christ.

"**And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.**" Matthew 11:12-13.

The great German commentator Meyer, comments on this passage, thus: "Jesus now continues His testimony regarding John, and in order to prove what He had just said of Him in verses Matt 11:10-11, He calls attention to the powerful movement in favor of the Messiah's kingdom, which had taken place since the commencement of the Baptist's ministry. . . . It is taken possession of by force, is conquered. . . . In this way is described that eager, irresistible striving and struggling after the approaching Messianic kingdom, which has prevailed since the Baptist began to preach; it is as though it were being taken by storm. . . . Such is now the character of the times, that those of whom the ***Biazetai*** holds true, achieve a speedy success, in that, while they press forward to join the ranks of my followers, they clutch at the approaching kingdom as though they were seizing spoils, and make it their own. So eager and energetic, (no longer calm and expectant) is the interest in regard to the kingdom. The ***Biastai*** are, accordingly, believers struggling hard for its possession."

Rotherham, in his Emphatic translation, and also Wilson in the *Emphatic Diaglott,* translate, "**the kingdom of heaven is invaded, and the invaders seize upon it.**"

Thayer's Grimm-Wilke's Lexicon defines Biazo; "to use force, to apply force; tini, to force, inflict violence on one; the act, is very rare and almost exclusively poetic.* In Matthew 11:12, the kingdom of heaven is taken by violence, carried by storm, i.e. a share

in the heavenly kingdom is sought for by the most ardent zeal, and the intensive exertion. The other explanation, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence from its enemies, agrees neither with the time when Christ spoke the words, nor with the context; cf. Fritzche, De Wette, Meyer, ad loc . . . In Matthew 11:12 those are called Biastai, by whom the kingdom of God Biazetai, i.e., who strived to obtain the privileges with the utmost eagerness and effort." Thus, the meaning of the passage is clearly settled by the ablest biblical scholars and critics.

*[J. R. Graves considered John Baptist as part of "the kingdom of heaven" that had "suffered violence." See *Seven Dispensations*; Part III, Eschatology, Chapter 2 below.

Also Henry Morris Bible Notes: "When John the Baptist came preaching the kingdom of heaven, he also came condemning sin and urging repentance and baptism to a new life. Some responded positively, but more reacted violently, as is often true when the gospel is preached. Those who react against the gospel would destroy the kingdom of heaven if they could, but must settle for destroying as many of its servants as they can. John himself was soon put to death, as was Christ and eventually the apostles, as well as multitudes of Christ's followers through the centuries. John was not the last of the Old Testament prophets, as some have thought, but the first of the New Testament prophets." Also in *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, covering all bets he adds: "or of the Gospel's suffering violence by the persecutions of its enemies opposing and contradicting it, reproaching it, intimidating the professors of it, and seeking to take away the life of Christ, the great subject of it:"-esn]

1. Logical Statement.

(a) What "suffered violence," or was "invaded?" The "kingdom of heaven."

(b) How long had it "suffered violence," or been "invaded?" "From the days of John the Baptist."

(c) When was John? Just before Christ.

2. Logical Statement.

(a) What prophesied "until" John? The "prophets and the law."

(b) What was "since" John? The "kingdom of heaven."

(c) Then this "kingdom of heaven," must have been something entirely different and distinct, from the "prophets and the law," since the Saviour puts them in such striking contrast to each other.

3. Logical Statement.

(a) What "suffered violence, and was forcibly seized by the violent," or "was invaded and seized by the invaders?" The "kingdom of heaven."

(b) An "invisible kingdom of grace" cannot suffer violence, or be seized upon by force.

(c) ***This*** "kingdom of heaven" ***did*** suffer violence and ***was*** invaded by the force of which Jesus speaks, therefore, it was ***not*** the invisible kingdom of grace.

4. Logical Statement.

(a) This "kingdom of heaven" was invaded, as an institution entirely ***new*** and ***distinct*** from any that had previously existed.

(b) Those who "invaded," or entered this institution, were Jewish men and women, who were at that time members of the old Jewish church.

(c) This "kingdom of heaven" then, must have been something entirely ***different*** and ***distinct*** from the old Jewish church, since these people could not have entered an institution of which they were already members.

First Syllogism.

(a) Violence cannot be exerted upon an institution which does not exist.

(b) This "kingdom of heaven" ***did*** suffer violence while Christ was upon the earth—before Pentecost.

(c) Therefore, this "kingdom" existed during Christ's personal ministry on earth—before Pentecost.

Second Syllogism.

(a) People cannot enter an institution of which they are already members.

(b) Members of the old Jewish church ***did*** enter this kingdom.

(c) Therefore, this "kingdom of heaven" was *not* the old Jewish church.

The Kingdom "Shut Up" During the Personal Ministry of Christ.

"**But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.**" The Emphatic Diaglott translates "neither enter yourselves, nor permit those approaching to enter, Rothenham translates, "For ye are not entering, neither those about to enter are ye permitting to enter," Matthew 23:13. Meyer says on this verse, "the approaching kingdom of the Messiah, is conceived of under the figure of a Palace, the doors of which have been thrown open in order that they may enter. But such is the opposition offered to Christ by the Scribes and Pharisees, that men withhold their belief from the Messiah who had appeared among them, and show themselves indifferent to the righteousness necessary, in order to gain admission into the kingdom from which they are consequently excluded. They thus shut the door of the kingdom in men's faces, . . . who are endeavoring to obtain admission."

1. Logical Statement.

(a) What rebuke was given to the Scribes and Pharisees? They would not "enter" the kingdom of heaven.

(b) If there was no kingdom to enter, was this rebuke just? Certainly not.

(c) Therefore, the Saviour justly rebuked these Scribes and Pharisees for not entering this kingdom.

2. Logical Statement.

(a) These Scribes and Pharisees were leading members of the old Jewish church, at the time that the Saviour thus rebuked them.

(b) If the Christian Church or kingdom was a continuation of the old Jewish church, how could they ***enter*** an institution to which they then belonged?

(c) Therefore, there must [not *-ed.*] have been a kingdom in continuation of the old Jewish church.

3. Logical Statement.

(a) What else did these Scribes and Pharisees do? By their influence and example, they prevented others from going in, who were desirous of entering into this "kingdom of heaven."

(b) If there was no "kingdom" into which they ***could*** enter, how could they keep these "others" out?

(c) Therefore, there must have been a kingdom in existence at that time,—during the personal ministry of Christ,—and ***before*** the day of Pentecost.

4. Logical Statement.

(a) These Scribes and Pharisees, as well as the other Jewish men and women, were members of the Jewish church at the time Christ uttered this rebuke.

(b) If the Christian Church was a continuation of the Jewish church, how could they keep these people out of an institution of which they were already members? And how reconcile this idea, with the declaration of the Saviour in the fifteenth verse? "ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."

(c) Therefore, the Christian Church is *not* a continuation of the old Jewish church.

First Syllogism.

(a) A rebuke to men for refusing to enter an organization that ***did not exist,*** was a ***manifest injustice,*** not to say an ***absurdity***.

(b) Jesus ***did*** rebuke these Scribes and Pharisees for refusing to enter this "kingdom."

(c) Therefore, if there was no kingdom in existence at that time into which they ***could*** enter, Jesus was clearly ***unjust*** and ***absurd*** in thus rebuking them.

Second Syllogism.

(a) There was a kingdom in existence at the time Christ was speaking, and it was the duty of these Scribes and Pharisees to enter it.

(b) They refused to enter it themselves, and did all they could to keep others from entering it.

(c) Therefore, Christ was perfectly justifiable in thus rebuking them.

Third Syllogism.

(a) The charge of injustice against Christ, in rebuking the Scribes and Pharisees for not entering this kingdom, is little short of blasphemy, and can arise only from an ***erroneous*** and ***unscriptural*** doctrine.

(b) But the doctrine, that Jesus had no kingdom at that time into which they ***could*** enter, makes the charge unjust, because it was an utter ***impossibility*** for them to enter an organization which ***had no existence!***

(c) Therefore, the doctrine of the non-existence of the Church or kingdom of Christ, during His personal ministry on earth, is ***erroneous and unscriptural***.

Fourth Syllogism

(a) To charge Jesus Christ with rebuking a people for not entering an organization of which they were already members, is to charge Him as being guilty of an ***absurdity,*** and can only result from an erroneous and unscriptural position.

(b) But the doctrine that the Jewish church and the Christian church is identical, would make Christ to be guilty of this absurdity, since these people were already members of the old Jewish church.

(c) Therefore, the doctrine that the Jewish church and the Christian church is identical, is erroneous and unscriptural.

The "Publicans and Harlots" Entered into the Kingdom, or Church of Christ, During His Personal Ministry on Earth.

"Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not

afterward, that ye might believe him." ("Yet you, having seen it, did not afterward repent, so as to believe him."—Em. Diaglott.) Matthew 21:31-32; cf. Luke 3:12; 7:29-30.

1. Logical Statement.

(a) Who were the "publicans and harlots"? Jewish men and women.

(b) What did they go into? The "kingdom of God."

(c) Then there must have been a "kingdom of God" in existence at that time, for them to "go into."

(d) Also, this "kingdom of God" must have been something entirely ***different and distinct*** from the old Jewish church, since they could not "***go into***" an institution of which ***they were already members!***

(e) People enter into the "kingdom of grace," or are saved, the moment they repent and believe.

(f) These publicans and harlots had repented and believed during the ministry of John, and had been baptized by him, Luke 3:12; 7:29-30.

(g) Therefore, they were already members of the "kingdom of grace"—saved, at the time Christ said they were entering this "kingdom of God," and hence, this "kingdom" they were then entering, was something entirely ***different*** and ***distinct*** from the "kingdom of grace" or salvation.

First Syllogism.

(a) Publicans and harlots, as live, active, visible men and women, could not have entered a non-existing, invisible church or kingdom.

(b) They *did* enter this "kingdom of God."

(c) Therefore, the kingdom or church of God, was an actual, visible church or kingdom of God, composed of live, active men and women, during the personal ministry of Christ on earth.

Second Syllogism.

(a) Christ could not have said, that the "publicans and harlots" went into this kingdom "before" the chief priests and elders, if the Church or kingdom of Christ was identical with the old Jewish church, since the chief-priests and elders were already members of the latter.

(b) But they ***did*** go into this kingdom "before" them.

(c) Therefore, this church or kingdom was ***not*** identical with the old Jewish organization.

Third Syllogism.

(a) These publicans and harlots had entered the "kingdom of grace"—had been saved as well as baptized, through the ministry of ***John***.

(b) They were entering this "kingdom of God" during the ministry of ***Christ.***

(c) Therefore, this Church or kingdom of God, is something distinct from the "kingdom of grace."

The Kingdom of God is Come unto You.

"**But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.**" - Mat 12:28; Luke 10:9-11; 11:20.

Deductions.

(a) From Matthew 12:28, *et al,* we learn that Jesus cast out devils during His personal ministry on earth.

(b) He declares that this was an evidence that the "kingdom of God" had come unto them.
(c) If it had ***"come*** unto them," they did not have it ***before.***

First Syllogism.

(a) If Jesus cast out devils, the "Kingdom of God" had come unto them.
(b) He cast out devils during His personal ministry.
(c) Therefore, the Kingdom of God was in existence during the personal ministry of Christ.

Second Syllogism.

(a) The "Kingdom of God," had ***come*** unto them,—was not among them ***prior*** to this time.
(b) The Jewish church ***was*** among them at that time.
(c) Therefore, the "Kingdom of God" and the old Jewish church were ***not*** identical.

The Kingdom of God is Among you.

"**And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.**" ("With outward show." Margin, and Em. Diaglott.) "**Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.**" ("among you," Margin, Em. Diaglott, and Rotherham, "in your midst," margin of Rev. Version), Luke 17:20-21

"***Entos***, within, inside with Gen. ***Entos humon***, within you; i.e., in the midst of you, Luke 17:21; others, 'within you' (i.e., 'in your souls'), a meaning which the use of the word permits, but not the context," Thayer's Grimm-Wilkes' Lexicon.

"In the midst of them the Messianic kingdom was, so far as He, the Messiah, was and worked, cf. Luke 11:20, Matthew 12:28, among them. . . . If others have explained '***entos humon***,' by 'In your souls,' there is, it is true, no objection to be raised on the score of grammar; but it is decidedly opposed to this, that '***humon***' refers to the Pharisees, in whose hearts nothing certainly found a place less than did the ethical kingdom of God,"-Meyer.

Deductions.

1. The "Kingdom of God" was in the midst of the Jews. The Saviour said so.
2. They did not ***know*** it, and were therefore, looking for something else.
3. Hence, it was not the old Jewish church, but something entirely ***different*** and ***distinct*** from it.

First Syllogism,

a. The kingdom or Church of God was in the midst of the Pharisees, and they had not recognized it.
b. They ***did*** recognize the old Jewish church, of which they were leading members.
c. Therefore, this "kingdom of God" was ***not*** identical with the old Jewish church, but something ***distinct*** from it.

Second Syllogism,

a. The "Kingdom of God" was an institution in the midst of the Jews, at the time Jesus uttered these words.
b. This was during the personal ministry of Christ.
c. Therefore, the Kingdom or Church of God was in existence during the personal ministry of Christ, and ***before Pentecost***.

Third Syllogism.

(a) Jesus said that the "kingdom of God" should not come with "***outward show,***" that is, its establishment should not be accompanied with a great noise and parade, or be distinguished by extraordinary outward or visible demonstrations, verse 20.

(b) But the "day of Pentecost" *was* accompanied with such a noise and parade, and *was* distinguished by such outward and visible demonstrations, Acts 2:1-3.

(c) Therefore, the kingdom, or Church of God, was ***not*** established on the "day of Pentecost."

Fourth Syllogism.

(a) Jesus said, that the people should not say, "Lo here, or Lo there!" (Gr. *idou! idou!)* that is they should ***not*** be astonished, or express their amazement at the signs and wonders accompanying the coming or establishment of His church or kingdom, verse 21.

(b) But the people ***were*** "amazed" at what they saw and heard on the "day of Pentecost," and expressed their astonishment by saying, "Behold," etc. (Gr. *idou!* the ***very word*** Jesus said they should ***not*** use on the occasion of the establishment of His kingdom), Acts 2:1-12.

(c) Therefore, the Church or kingdom of God was ***not*** established on the "day of Pentecost."

Thus we see from the express statements of Jesus Christ Himself, that the idea, that the Church or kingdom of God was established or "set up" on the "day of Pentecost," is without the slightest foundation in the Word of God!

The Kingdom to be Taken Away.

"**The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof,**" Matthew 21:43. Read from verse 33, to the end of the chapter.

Deductions

(1) The Church or Kingdom of God was first established among the Jews, as a people.

(2) As a people, they rejected it, John 1:11-12.

(3) In the parable it is said, that "He sent His servants" to the husbandmen, vs. 34. The twelve were first sent out, and commanded to "go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand," Matthew 10:5-7; cf. Luke 9:1-6.

(4) Then "He sent other servants more than the first," vs. 36. This was fulfilled when He sent forth the "seventy," and told them to preach. "the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you," Luke 10:1-11.

(5) "Last of all He sent His Son," etc., vs. 37. "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," Matthew 15:24. "Now, after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, **The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.**" Mark 1:14-15

(6) When they had rejected it, it was "to be taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof," vs. 43. "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, Lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth," Acts 13:46-47, cf. Matthew 28:19-20.

(7) Since it was not the Jewish church that was taken from the Jewish people and given to the Gentiles, the "kingdom of God" was not the Jewish church.

(8) The Jews as a people, were in possession of this "kingdom of God" at the time the Saviour was speaking, else it could not have been "taken away" from them.

First Syllogism.

(a) The Jewish church was never taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles.
(b) This "kingdom of God" was thus taken away.
(c) Therefore, this kingdom of God was *not* identical with the old Jewish church.

Second Syllogism.

(a) Christ could not have said, "this kingdom shall be taken" from the people whom He was addressing, unless it had been in existence at that time.
(b) But He did make such a declaration.
(c) Therefore, this "kingdom" was in existence at the time Christ spake, and hence, before Pentecost.

It was not a Worldly, but a Spiritual Kingdom.

"**Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a King, then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world,**" etc., John 18:36-37. The word translated "servants" in verse 36, is the same word exactly that is translated "officers" in verses John 18:3, 12, 18, 22 and in many other places, and "officers" is put in the margin of the Rev. Version, and is the translation given by Rotherham and the Emphatic Diaglott.

Deductions.

1. Christ's kingdom was not a worldly kingdom, nevertheless it was a kingdom in the world, composed of men and women chosen out of the world, John 8:23; 15:19; 17:14-16. It is a spiritual kingdom not political or secular.

2. As a King, He had subjects—servants or officers—who were ready to fight for Him, Matthew 26:51-52.

3. As a King, He gave laws for the government of His subjects, Matthew. 5th to 7th, and 18th chapters.

4. He confessed to Pilate that He was a King, and had come into the world for this very purpose!

5. His kingdom was not the Jewish church or nation per se, for it was the "chief priests and elders" of this church, that were His most inveterate enemies, and were the immediate cause of His death. And if this was the institution of which the Saviour claimed the spiritual head-ship, then we have the marvelous spectacle, of a body committing spiritual suicide by cutting off its own head, and yet continuing to live!

6. The Jewish kingdom was a secular power, but the kingdom of Christ was a spiritual institution.

First Syllogism.

(a) A King without a kingdom is not really a King.
(b) Jesus said He was a King when He stood before Pilate.
(c) Therefore, He had a kingdom at that time.

Second Syllogism.

(1) Five things are essential to a kingdom:**(a)** A King; **(b)** subjects; **(c)** laws; **(d)** territory; **(e)** power, or authority.

(2) Jesus was **(a)** a King; He had **(b)** subjects; He gave **(c)** laws; He possessed **(d)** territory; He had **(e)** power, or authority, John 17:2; Matthew 28:18, *et al*.

(3) Therefore, He was a King and had a kingdom while He was on earth.

Third Syllogism.

(a) Christ's kingdom was "not of this world,"—not a secular or political kingdom, else His servants would have fought to prevent His deliverance into the hands of His enemies.

(b) The Jewish kingdom was a secular or political institution, and were constantly engaged in fighting with their enemies.

(c) Therefore, the kingdom of Christ and the Jewish kingdom were not identical.

The Executive Management of the Affairs of Christ's Kingdom Transferred to the Apostles.

"**And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**" Luke 22:29-30. Rotherham and the Em. Diaglott translate "Diatithemi," by the word "covenant." instead of "appoint."

"***Diatithemi***,—to place separately. dispose. arrange. appoint. (1)To arrange, dispose of one's own affairs, i.e., of something that belongs to one; with dative of person added, in one's favor, to one's advantage; hence, to assign a thing to another as his possession, Luke 22:29." (Thayer's Grimm—Wilkes' Lex.)

Deductions

(1) The Father had appointed or covenanted unto the Son a kingdom. "**I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree,**" Psalm 2:6-7.

(2) As Supreme Ruler in this Kingdom, He had a right to make such arrangements for its future management, and such disposition of its blessings and honors, as He saw proper.

(3) This He did by appointing the future management and control of the affairs of His kingdom, to his disciples as a body, (and not to any one of them, as the Catholics falsely claim), and distributing the honors of His kingdom to them equally.

(4) While He did this, He still retained His kingship and sovereignty in it—they were to "Sit at my table in my kingdom."

(5) In the final triumphant consummation, they were to "**sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**" This was to be their especial prerogative. "Do not ye judge them that are within?" etc., 1 Cor. 5:12. "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world," etc.? I Corinthians 6:2-3.[Matthew 19:28; Daniel 7:22 -esn]

First Syllogism.

(a) A person cannot appoint or covenant to another, that which he himself does not possess.

(b) Jesus did appoint or covenant a kingdom unto His disciples.

(c) Therefore, He possessed a kingdom while He was on earth.

Second Syllogism.

(a) Jesus appointed a kingdom unto His disciples, as His Father had appointed unto Him.

(b) These disciples were in ***real, actual*** possession of His kingdom after this appointment, and ate and drank, and exercised ecclesiastical power therein. [*cf.* Luke 22:16; 24:41-44 -esn]

(c) Therefore, Jesus was in real, actual possession of His kingdom during His personal ministry on earth.

Third Syllogism.

(a) The kingdom, or Church in which the Apostles ate and drank, and in which they exercised ecclesiastical authority, was not the Jewish kingdom or church.

(b) It was the same kingdom that had been appointed unto Jesus Christ by the Father.

(c) Therefore, the Church, or kingdom of Jesus Christ was not the old Jewish church or kingdom.

Argument Based upon Those Scriptures Which Represent the Church or Kingdom of Christ as a Body, of Which He is the Head.

"**The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.**" Ephesians 1:18-23; cf. 1 Corinthians 12:12-28; Ephesians 4:12-32; Colossians 1:18-24, et al.

Deductions.

(1) The word "church" is used in this, and kindred passages, by a figure of speech called "synecdoche," to represent the church institution, or church organization. It does not mean that Christ is the "head of the church" only "at Ephesus," or "at Colosse," nor does it mean that He is the Head of a great big, universal church, composed of all the lesser churches, or of all the saved taken together, for there is no such an institution. But the word "church" is used in these passages, just as we use the word "oak" in the sentence, "the oak is the monarch of the wood," or the word "eagle," when we say, "the eagle is the king of birds." We do not mean one particular oak or eagle, nor yet, an oak composed of all the oaks in the world, or of an eagle composed of all the eagles in the world. There is frequent use of this figure of speech by the inspired writers. For example: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib," Isaiah 1:3. The inspired penman did not mean just one special, or particular "ox" and his "owner," or one particular "ass" and his "master," Neither did he mean one big, universal ox composed of all the oxen on earth, owned by one big, universal owner composed of all the owners on earth, etc. But the word "ox" is used as a representative of the class or species of the oxen, as distinguished from all other animals, and so of the other words in the quotation, The word "church" is thus used in the above passages.

(2) "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church," evidently means, that the dominion and government and control of all things in the church was given into his hands. When was this done? "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God," etc., John 13:3. "**All things are delivered unto me of my Father,**" etc., Matthew 11:27; Luke 10:22; John 3:35; 17:2. "**All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth,**" etc., Matthew 28:18, et al.

Syllogism.

(a) Dominion, power, government and control, cannot be exercised over a non-existent Church or kingdom.

(b) Jesus possessed and exercised this dominion, power, government, and control, during His personal ministry on earth.

(c) Therefore, He possessed a Church or kingdom, over which He exercised this dominion, power, government and control, during His personal ministry on earth.

Christ is Called a Bridegroom, and the Church a Bride.

"**Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.**" John 3:28-30. [cf. Genesis 2:21-25; 2 Corinthians 11:2-esn]

Deductions

(1) Christ is here called a "**bridegroom**."

(2) A bridegroom is impossible without a "bride." The church is the bride of Christ, Ephesians 5:22-32 et al.

(3) Moreover, John says, "he that hath the bride, is the bridegroom." Present tense.

(4) The bridegroom was to be taken away from the bride. "Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?— And Jesus said unto them, can the children of the bridechamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the day will come when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then they shall fast," Matthew 9:14-15.

(5) John rejoiced, that he could "hear the bridegroom's voice," while he was here on earth.

(6) Christ must "increase"—His kingdom must be enlarged!

(7) John must "decrease." His followers must become fewer and fewer in number. They must be taken to increase the kingdom of Christ. He was sent to "prepare a people for the Lord." The Lord was taking this people whom He had prepared, therefore his "joy was fulfilled."

First Syllogism.

(a) A bridegroom without a bride is impossible.

(b) Jesus Christ was a Bridegroom while He was on earth.

(c) Therefore, He had a bride while He was on earth.

Second Syllogism.

(a) Jesus Christ had a bride while He was on earth.

(b) The Church is called the bride of Christ.

(c) Therefore, He had a Church while He was on earth.

Third Syllogism.

(a) The children of the bride-chamber were to mourn when He was taken away.

(b) The members of the old Jewish church did ***not*** mourn—on the contrary, they ***rejoiced.***

(c) Therefore, the members of the old Jewish church, were *not* members of the bride-chamber——the church of Christ, i.e., the two churches were *not* identical.

This Bride or Church of Christ is Called a City.

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ... Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, . . . And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." etc., Rev. 21:2-27.

Deductions

1. John saw the bride, or church of Christ. under the figure of a "City."

2. Carrying out the figure,—in the construction of this city. John saw the "twelve foundations."

3. Recorded in these foundations, were "the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb," thus showing that they were the first, or original members in the foundation of His church.

4. Paul also taught that the Ephesians (one of the churches to which John wrote, Rev. 2:1), had been "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself, being the chief corner—stone," etc., Eph. 2:20.

5. If they were the "foundation stones" of this city, it did not have an existence prior to the time they were placed in the foundation. As to when that was done, see Mark 3:13-19.

"**And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would and they came unto him. And he ordained twelve.**" etc. "**And of them he chose twelve, whom, he named apostles,**" etc., Luke 6:13-16.

First Syllogism.

(a) A city cannot exist before laying the foundation.

(b) The "calling" or 'ordination" of the "twelve Apostles," was laying the foundations of this city.

(c) Therefore, this city did not exist before the calling or ordination of the twelve Apostles.

Second Syllogism.

(a) The Church or bride of Christ is called a "city."

(b) The calling and ordination of the twelve Apostles, was laying the foundation of this city.

(c) Therefore, the calling and ordination of the twelve Apostles, was laying the foundation of His church.

The Gospel of the Kingdom was Preached by the Saviour During His Personal Ministry on Earth.

"**Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.**" Mark 1:14-15.

(1) The kingdom of God has a "gospel." Evaggelion, the word translated "gospel," is thus defined. 1. A reward for good tidings. 2. Good tidings. . . . In the New Testament specially. (a) The glad tidings of the kingdom of God soon to be set up, and subsequently, also of Jesus, the Messiah, the founder of this kingdom, Mark 1:14-15, et al.

"After the death of Christ, this term comprises also the preaching of (concerning) Jesus Christ as having suffered death on the cross, to procure eternal salvation for men in the kingdom of God, but as restored to life, and exalted to the right of God in heaven, thence to return in majesty

to consummate the kingdom of God; so that it may be more briefly defined as the glad tidings of salvation through Christ; the gospel." Thayer's Grimm-Wilke's Lex. Jesus proclaims the "good news," the "glad tidings," that "the kingdom of God is at hand."

(2) "The time is fulfilled." The prophecies which foretold the establishment of the kingdom, e.g., Daniel 2:44, by the "God of heaven," are fulfilled.

"**And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people,**" Matthew 9:35.

1. Logical Statement.

(a) The kingdom of God has a gospel.

(b) A non-existent organization could not have a gospel.

(c) Therefore, the kingdom of God was a real, literal, existing institution.

2. Logical Statement.

(a) The prophecies which related to the establishment of this kingdom, could not have been "fulfilled" while it was still non-existent,

(b) But these prophecies ***were fulfilled***, while Christ was here on earth.

(c) Therefore, the kingdom was in existence during His personal ministry on earth.

This Gospel of the Kingdom is to be Preached to all Nations as a Witness Before the End of this Dispensation.

"**And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.**" Matthew 24:14. See references.

Deductions.

1. John the Baptist preached this "gospel," Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-5; John 1:6-15; 3:36.

2. Jesus Christ preached it, Mark 1:14-15, *et at*.

3. The Apostles preached it, Mark 6:12; Luke 9:2-6.

4. The Seventy preached it, Luke 10:1-20.

5. We preach it. No other people do!

6. When this "gospel of the kingdom" shall have been preached in all the world—"among all nations"—then shall the end of this "age" come.[Mt. 24:14]

7. The wonderful revival of interest in missions began among the Baptists in England, in the year 1792. In view of the fact, that we have ***"the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,*** we are under peculiar and special obligations, to preach this gospel of the kingdom to all nations. ***None others can!***

Logical Statement.

(a) A commission to preach "this gospel of the kingdom," when there was no kingdom in existence to preach, would be a commission to preach a falsehood.

(b) Christ commissioned the preaching of such a gospel.

(c) Therefore, the kingdom existed when Christ gave this commission, since He could not and ***would not*** commission the preaching of an untruth.

Is Based upon the Line of Distinction Between the Church and the World, Drawn by our Saviour, During His Personal Ministry on Earth.

"**Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain. . . . If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you,**" John 15:16-18. "**I have manifested Thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world,**" etc. "**They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world,**" John 17:6, 16. "**My kingdom is not of this world,**" etc. John 18:36.

Deductions

(1) In these passages, Jesus Christ, draws a line of distinction between His disciples, and the rest of mankind, whom He called "the world."

(2) This distinction is based upon moral or spiritual qualifications, and is as clearly defined, as the distinction between Himself and the "world."

(3) He declares, that he has "chosen them OUT of the world," and "ordained them, that they should go and bring forth fruit." This was done when He called them out and ordained them apostles, as recorded in Mark 3:13-19, and Luke 6:13-16.

(4) This choosing out, or separation from the world, was done shortly after He entered upon His ministry, and was just as complete a separation from the world, as that which exists between His Church and the world today.

(5) As regards the religious standing of men in the world they may be either in the "Church," or in the "world," either in the "kingdom of God," or the "kingdom of Satan." But as regards their moral or spiritual state before God, they are either the "servants of righteousness," or the "servants of sin"; either the "children and heirs of God," or the "children and heirs of the devil," Matthew 6:24. Admission into the "Church" or "kingdom of heaven" however, does not depend exclusively on moral qualification. Immoral men have, and will enter the Church. See 1 Corinthians 5:1-13**;** John 6:64, 70, cf. Matthew 8:21-23; 13:36-43.

First Syllogism.

(a) Men cannot be "in the Church" and "in the world" at the same time.—Jesus.
(b) The disciples were not ***"in*** the world,"—they had been "chosen ***out"*** of it.—Jesus.
(c) Therefore, they ***were*** in the Church.

Second Syllogism.

(a) These disciples were "in the Church" during the personal ministry of Christ on earth.
(b) Men cannot be in an institution of this kind that does not exist.
(c) Therefore, the Church was in existence during the personal ministry of Christ on earth.

Christ Taught by Parables, that His Church or Kingdom was an Entirely New and Distinct Institution, from any Which had Preceded it.

"**No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.**" *{new: or, raw, or, unwrought}* Matthew 9:16.

Deductions

1. "Old garment," evidently the old Jewish church.

2. "New cloth." evidently a new system of church government, rites, ceremonies. etc.

3. Therefore, the church or kingdom of Christ, was not the old Jewish church reformed, or "patched up."

"**Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.**" *{bottles: or, sacks of skin, or, leather}* Matt. 9:17.

1. "**Old bottles,**" old Jewish church organization.

2. "**New bottles,**" new church organization.

3. "**New wine,**" new doctrine, new practices, etc.

4. "**Both are preserved,**" these new doctrines, new practices, new ordinances, etc., belong to an entirely new and distinct institution, and they are both to be "**preserved**"—perpetuated.

The Church was Complete and Perfect in its Constitution and Organization, the Members Enjoying and Exercising all the Rights, Privileges and Immunities, of Membership Therein, During the Personal Ministry of Christ on Earth.

Let us again define a Church: "A Church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated together in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, and exercising the gifts, rights and privileges, invested in them by His Word." Bap. Con. of Faith.

Or take another definition, which, with a very little explanation, any Baptist would endorse: "A visible Church of Christ, is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that are requisite to the same." Dis. of M. E.. Church, S.

If we understand by the phrase "faithful men,"— believing men and women, and by the term "sacraments," the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper merely, without any saving efficacy, we can readily accept this definition of a Church.

Now let us apply these definitions, and see whether' there was such an institution under the personal ministry of Christ.

Deductions.

1. Here was a "congregation of faithful men,"—believers. "And His disciples believed on (*eis,* in) Him."— John 2:11. "For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God," etc., John 16:27-31, *cf.* John 17:8, 14-20, *et al.*

2. They were "baptized believers." John the Baptist was sent to "**prepare a people for the Lord,**" and while engaged in that work he said, "**I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire,**" Matthew 3:11. Here it is declared that the same persons John baptized "**with** (Greek *en,* in) **water,**" Christ was to baptize "**with** (Greek, *en)* **the Holy Ghost.**" Accordingly, we find the Saviour calling their attention to John's baptism, just before His ascension, saying, "**For John truly baptized with water** *(ebaptisen hudati,* immersed in water); **but you shall be baptized** *(en pneumati hagioi)* **in the Holy Ghost, not many days hence,**" Acts 1:5. From the second chapter of Acts, we find that the twelve disciples were the ones who were baptized in the Holy Ghost, and hence, they were the ones whom John had baptized in water. Additional weight is given to this argument, if any such weight were necessary, when it is remembered, that an essential qualification for an apostle to be selected in the place of the traitor Judas, was that he should "**have companied with them all**

the time the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, beginning from the baptism of John," Acts 1:21-22, *cf.* John 1:35-37.

3. "Associated together in the faith and fellowship of the gospel." They "**companied**" together during Christ's ministry.

4. "In which the pure Word of God is preached." See Matthew 5, 6, and 7 chapters; Luke 6:20-49; John 14, 15 and 16 chapters, *et mul al.* Surely if the "pure Word of God" was ever preached on this earth, it was preached by the Lord Jesus Christ, during His personal ministry on earth.

5. "And the ordinances rightly administered."

(a) ***Baptism***. "**And after these things came Jesus and His disciples into the land of Judea, and there He tarried with them and baptized**," John 3:22. "**When, therefore, the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (though Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples,)**, John 4:1-2.

(b) ***The Lord's Supper.*** "**And He took bread and gave thanks, and break *it*, and gave it to them, saying, this is my body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me. Likewise, the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you,**" Luke 22:19-20, *cf.* Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22, 26; 1 Corinthians 11th chapter. Certainly this ordinance was observed as a *Church* ordinance. The Psalmist David had foretold, "I **will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation** *(ekklesia)* **will I praise thee,**" Ps. 22:22. The Apostle Paul quotes this language, and applies it to Christ; "**For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the Church** *(ekklesia)* **will I sing praise unto thee,**" Hebrews 2:11-12. According to Paul's interpretation and application of David's prophecy, Christ was to "**sing praise in the midst of the Church.**" When was that prophecy fulfilled? Matthew and Mark say, at the close of the supper, that "**when they had sung an hymn,** (margin, ***psalm),*** **they went out into the Mount of Olives,**" Matthew 26:30; Mk. 14:26. This is the only place in the New Testament, where Jesus Christ is ever said to have engaged in singing, and we find that He sang in the "***midst of the Church!***" Hence it follows, as clear as the noon-day sun, that He had a Church during His personal ministry on earth!

Syllogism.

(a) Christ ***was*** to sing, and ***did*** sing "in the midst of the Church," ***David and Paul.***

(b) He sang at the close of the institution of the "Lord's Supper," ***Matthew and Mark***.

(c) Therefore He had a Church at that time—during His personal ministry on earth.

6. Exercised discipline in the Church, "**And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.**" Matthew 16:19. "Keys" are symbols of authority, and the Saviour here bestows upon the disciples power to receive and expel members, and exercise authority in the Church, as His executive body on earth. Not to Peter alone, but the entire twelve. See John 20:19-23, *et al*. When a contractor builds a house, he does not deliver the keys until the building is complete. They were to exercise discipline in the Church or Kingdom so as to maintain peace and fellowship. "**Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the Church but if he neglect to hear the Church. let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in**

heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Matthew 18:15-18.

Thus it is seen that the Church was the Court of last resort among those disciples.

7. They met together for the purpose of engaging in prayer and the worship of God.

"**These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren,**" Acts 1:13-14.

8. They transacted Church business, by electing Matthias to the apostleship in place of the traitor Judas.

"**And they prayed, and said, Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen. That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles,**" Acts 1:24-26. Jesus had previously told them, "**That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything, that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father, who is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together In my name, there am I in the midst of them,**" Matthew 18:19-20. Also any action they performed in their capacity as a Church on earth, should be ratified "**in Heaven,**" Matthew 18:18.

It is asserted by our Campbellite friends, that the action of the disciples in electing Matthias to the apostleship was unwarranted, and that he was never recognized as an apostle, because forsooth, his name is not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, in connection with their work; and this, too, in the face of the declaration of their divine Master that their action should be ratified. The mere fact, that the name of Matthias is not mentioned subsequently, is of no force in disproving his claims to the apostleship, for neither are the names of some of the other apostles mentioned after this time, e.g., Andrew, Bartholomew, Thomas, Philip and Simon Zelotes. On the other hand, the inspired penman Luke, declares that their action was the fulfillment of a prophecy in the Psalms: "**Let his dwelling be desolate, and let no man dwell therein; and let another take his office,**" Acts 1:20; (Rev. Version, Em. Dia., Rotherham, and margin of A.V.) And he further declares that "**he was numbered with the eleven apostles,**" verse 26. And that he was in truth and verity an apostle, equal with the others, is seen from the fact that he was with them on the day of Pentecost, and received the baptism of the Spirit on that occasion, Acts 2:14. If Matthias was ever rejected, and Paul was the one chosen to fill the place of Judas, as our Campbellite friends teach, surely Luke would have recorded so important a fact. But he has not said one word intimating such a procedure. Nor does Paul in any of his writings, ever hint of such a thing, although he frequently speaks of himself in connection with the other apostles. But it is characteristic of the advocates of error, that they are compelled to flatly contradict the teachings of the Scriptures, in order to maintain a false and unscriptural creed.

The Church of Christ is Represented Under the Figure of a "Wife," Beloved of her Husband.

"**For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. . . . Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word,**

that He might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." etc., Ep. 5:23-33.

Deductions

(1) The relationship existing between Christ and His church is here represented under the figure of that bond of love, which unites the husband and wife.

(2) He declares, that as "**the husband is the head of the wife, so Christ is the Head of the church,**" and therefore, "**as the church is subject unto Christ, so the wives should be in subjection to their own husbands in everything,**" cf. 1 Pet. 3:1-6. For a church of Christ to acknowledge the authority of any one else, except her Divine Lord and Master, by rendering obedience to other than His divine commands, is simply to confess herself an "ecclesiastical harlot!"

(3) He further exhorts the husband to love his wife, "**even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.**"

(4) Paul declares that the object which prompted this love, was "**that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might cause it to stand by his side,**" (Greek, Em. Diaglott', et mul al) "**a glorious church,**" etc.

Just as a bride stands by the side of her husband at the altar, when the marriage ceremony is being performed, arrayed in spotless white, indicative of her pure and unsullied virtue and innocence, so the redeemed church, when she shall have been completed, is to stand by the side of her Divine Husband and Lord, clothed in the robes of spotless righteousness wrought out for her, and hear those blessed words of joy and gladness, which are to unite her to Him, to enjoy His presence, and share His glorious inheritance forever. John, in the Apocalyptic vision beheld this glorious consummation, and thus describes it: "**Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb,**" Rev. 19:7-9, cf, Matthew 22:2-14; 25:1-13; Rev. 21:2-9.

(5) Prompted by the love Christ bore for His church, "**He gave himself for it,**" i.e., He died on the cross for her salvation.

It would have been impossible for Paul to have used the above figure, as it is used in this passage, if the Church as an institution, had not been in existence at the time Christ died for it. As an illustration, take the passage, "**God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,**" etc., John 3:16. It would have been impossible for God to have loved the "world" at all, if there had been no world in existence to love, and in like manner, it would have been impossible for Christ to have loved the "Church," if there had been no Church in existence to love. And just as it would have been impossible for God to have given His Son to die for the "world," if there had been no world in existence for which to die, so it would have been impossible for Jesus Christ to have given Himself for the "Church," if there had been no Church in existence for which to make this sacrifice.

First Syllogism.

(a) A husband cannot "give himself," that is, die for a wife, who does not really exist.

(b) Jesus Christ as such a "husband," "gave Himself," i.e., died for His Church, while He was here on earth.

(c) Therefore, the Church had a ***real*** existence while He was here on earth.

Second Syllogism.

(a) A husband cannot love a ***wife,*** so as, prompted by that love, he would die for her, who does not ***really and actually possess*** a wife for which to die.

(b) Jesus Christ, as such a "husband" "loved the church," and prompted by that love, He died for her.

(c) Therefore, His church had a ***real, actual*** existence prior to His death!

And so, in whatever light the subject is presented by the inspired penmen, whether viewed under the figure of a house, temple, tabernacle, bride or wife, or whether presented in its real character as a Church or Kingdom, it has been proven over and over again, by Scripture and logic, if it is possible to prove anything in this world, that Jesus Christ had a Church while He was on earth, and that it was organized or established under His personal supervision and direction, and thus He accomplished one of the ***principal objects*** of His mission in this world!

CHRIST CAME TO EARTH TO SET UP A KINGDOM: *by J. R. Graves.*

THE WORK OF CHRIST IN THE COVENANT OF REDEMPTION; DEVELOPED IN SEVEN DISPENSATIONS. An excerption out of Part III, Eschatology, Covering the Period from the Birth of Christ until the Final Consummation. Christ's Redemptive Work Finished and GOD "All in All" as it was in the Beginning. Earth the Home and Heaven of the Redeemed -- chps. 1-2, 1883 A.D.

"I claim that liberty which I willingly yield to others - in subjects of difficulty to put forward as true such things as appear to be profitable, until proved to be manifestly false." --- Hervey

Introduction.

... upon the study of the prophecies of Christ fulfilled and unfulfilled we give our readers the eloquent remarks of Dr. Bonar, of Scotland,...

"MAN'S thoughts about the future and the unseen are of little worth. They are, at best, but dreams—no more than the blind guesses of fancy. They approach no nearer to the truth than do a child's conjectures regarding the history of some distant star, or as to the peopling of space beyond the outskirts of the visible creation.

But the thoughts of God respecting the future are precious beyond measure. They are truth and certainty, whether they touch upon the far-off or the near, the likely or the unlikely. They are disfigured with no miscalculations; for they are the thoughts of the great Designer regarding his own handiwork. Of however little moment it may be for us to know what **man** thinks about the future, it is of vast moment for us to know what GOD thinks of it. However few these revealed thoughts of God may be, yet they ought to be estimated by us as above all price. They are the thoughts of an infinite mind; and they are the thoughts of that mind upon a subject utterly inaccessible to us, yet entirely familiar to Him who sees the end from the beginning, and whose wisdom has pre-arranged the whole.

These thoughts of God about the future are what we call **prophecy**; and, in studying prophecy, we are studying the thoughts of God—the purposes of his heart. Of these his secrets, he is not unwilling that we should be partakers; nay, he has spread them out before us—he has recorded them for our use; and deep must be the guilt, as well as incalculable the loss, of those who turn aside from such a study; who will listen with some interest, perhaps, to **man's** ideas of what is coming to pass upon the earth, but never think of inquiring what is the **mind of God.**

. . . .

We know how sadly many are fettered with prejudices upon this subject, and haunted with the idea of the presumptuous nature of the study. But surely the mere fact of prophecy forming a part of the Divine revelation is quite sufficient to satisfy us of the lawfulness, nay, the strict duty of studying it, not only in its general heads, but in its most minute particulars. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy of this book," are the words of encouragement; and though we had not another similar text in Scripture, that single one would be enough for us. I confess that not only do I not sympathize with, but I do not at all understand, the principle or reason of this prejudice; nor is it very easy to trace it to any thing like a Scriptural or rational source. Surely no one can think of maintaining that the mere futurity of a thing renders it unprofitable, and stamps with the charge of rashness any attempt to investigate it minutely. Yet this is the only conceivable meaning of the objection. And if so, how foolish—how sinful is it when calmly weighed! For the unlawfulness or unprofitableness of our inquiries into any subject consists not in the matter being either past, present or future, but simply in its not being revealed. It would be just as wise to bar all minute search into Scripture history on the ground of its being past, as it is to inhibit all minute inquiry into prophecy because it is future.

The fact of God having revealed so many particulars regarding the future settles the whole question as to the duty of every believer to examine these. It is as plain as truth can be, that no investigation, however minute, can be called presumptuous, so long as it restricts itself to what is written; nay, the more minute, the more accurate it is likely to be, and therefore more accordant with the mind of the Spirit. The presumption is all the other way. It is the presumption of closing the ear against the voice of God—the presumption of professing to decide how much of God's Word may be studied with safety, and how much ought to be neglected as mysterious and unprofitable. Will the reader consider well these Scriptures?— Deut. 29:29; Isa. 45:11; Mark 13:23; Luke 24:25; Matt. 16:3; 24:25; 2 Peter 1:19; 3:17; Rev. 1:3; 19:10; 22:7, 10."

Friday Morning of the World's Week: ***The Incarnation.***

The Incarnation of the Second Person in the Trinity as the Son of God, fulfilling the exact Predictions of the Prophets ages before the Event—Demonstrative Evidence of the Authenticity of the Scriptures—Christ came to Earth to set up a Kingdom—The Kingdom set up in the Days of John the Baptist, and both He and Christ in the Kingdom.

THE Anthem of the Angels, which broke upon the deep darkness of the moral night, which had settled down upon the whole world, as Thursday's sun sunk behind the dark cloud of a ritualized and perverted Christianity, announced the day-break of a brighter dispensation to be ushered in by the personal Advent and incarnation of the Second Person in the Godhead, as the Son of God. He came to fulfill the prophecies concerning himself, and to inaugurate a new era by setting up a new institution—a visible kingdom—on this earth, as prophets and holy men had predicted during the ages past.

Predictions of the Prophets.

As demonstrative proof of the authenticity of our Holy Scriptures it may not be amiss to refer to some of these here.

Moses, fourteen hundred and thirty-one years before the event, foretold that a Divine Prophet would be raised up unto Israel in coming ages, of which he was a type, and that he who heard not the voice of that Prophet would be cut off. (Deut. 18:18-19.) This Prophet was none other than the Son of God, and made by the oath of God a Priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec.

It was foretold by Isaiah seven hundred and fifty-eight years before the event, that he was to be born of a virgin:

> *Behold, **a virgin shall conceive and bear a son**, and shall call his name Immanuel "—God with us.—Isa. 7:14.*

It was foretold by Micah seven hundred and ten years before, that this wonderful event would take place in the insignificant town of Bethlehem of Judea:

> *"But thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me who is to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."—Mic. 5:2.*

The very age of the world in which the Son of God, as the Messiah of Israel, was to appear, was pointed out by the holy men of old as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

The dying Jacob, in blessing Judah, sixteen hundred and eighty-nine years previously, said:

> *"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."—Gen. 49:10.*

The obvious meaning of this is, that Judah should retain the supremacy among the tribes, and should yield it to no other. History verifies this. Judah maintained its nationality despite the dismemberment of the kingdom, and the seventy years of captivity, and, at the coming of Messiah, still retained its national institutions and laws, soon after which they ceased forever; which should be convincing to every Jew and Gentile that the Messiah of Israel appeared shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem.

It was foretold by Daniel six hundred and three years before the event, that Messiah should appear in the days of the Roman empire [cf. note pg. 7 -ed.] the kings of the fourth universal empire--and should himself set up a kingdom on earth. (See Dan. 2:40, and onward.)

> *"And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. . . . And in the days of these kings [i.e., of the fourth kingdom,] shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."*

The four kingdoms represented by this image as confessed by all commentators, were: **1.** The Babylonian, under Nebuchadnezzar; **2.** The Medo-Persian, under Darius; **3.** The Grecian, under Alexander; **4.** The Roman, under the Caesars. All these have forever passed away, never more to rise; and therefore, the period when Christ, the God of heaven, should set up his kingdom is passed; and, unless he did set it up in "the days of these kings"—the life-time of one of the Roman emperors—this prophecy is evidently false: for if it was not **then** fulfilled, it **never can be fulfilled**. The attempt of some modern theorists to make it refer to the kings of ten kingdoms symbolized by the ten toes, in order to place the setting up of Christ's kingdom in

some far, distant age, is groundless; for it must be evident to all that the **toes**, with the legs and feet of this image, have, with the Roman empire in all its parts, **forever** passed away. It is a conceded fact that this prophecy was understood by the Jews, and by the Romans themselves, as one that would be fulfilled in the days of the Caesars; and Virgil, in a beautiful Eclogue, manifestly based upon the prophecy of Isaiah, wrote as though it was to be fulfilled in the Consul Pollio.

> *"Now the virgin returns, now the kingdom of Saturn returns, now a new progeny is sent down from high heaven. By means of these, whatever reliques of our crimes remain shall be wiped away, and free the world from perpetual fears. He shall govern the earth in peace with the virtues of his Father."—Ecl. iv.*

Daniel foretells the exact time when the promised Messiah should appear, and the time when he should be cut off, with all of which dates we must suppose the Jews of that age were perfectly familiar:

> *"Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after three-score and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself; and the people of the Prince that shall come shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."—Dan. 9:25-26.*

So well satisfied was the Jewish nation that the time was at hand when the Messiah was to appear, that it was already upon the very tiptoe of expectancy when his herald, in the wilderness of Judea, announced his approach.

It was foretold that he was to be a lineal descendant of the royal family of David—who should reign as king on the throne of David:

> *"And there shall come a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."-Isa. 11:1.*
> *"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will rise up unto David a righteous Branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." —Jeremiah 33:15.*
> *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."—Isaiah 9:6-7.*

Instead of "Everlasting Father," read "Father of the Everlasting Ages," which better agrees with the original, for it is evident that he could not be both Son and Father at the same time, or any time, and no being could literally be an "Everlasting Father," or an "Everlasting Son," since the very terms involve a contradiction.

Now these things specifically prophesied of Christ, of which we must look for the fulfillment in connection with Jesus of Nazareth, before we are justified in claiming him as the promised Messiah and our Saviour:

1. That he was born of a virgin. This is established by the testimony of [Isaiah 7:14, etc. *-ed.*]

2. That he was of the family of David. This is proved by his genealogy as given by Matthew.

3. He did set up a new religious organization, which he called the Kingdom of God—of heaven—his kingdom.

4. He honored the law of God in all its **preceptive** requirements by a sinless life.

5. He satisfied the violated law for his people by suffering its penal sanctions.

These two last prophecies concerning him all Christians freely and joyfully concede. The only question before us for discussion is, "Did Christ set up a religious

organization which he called his kingdom, in the days of the Caesars?" If he did not, then we are warranted in rejecting him as the Messiah of Israel, and the Saviour of lost men.

Daniel 2:44-45 had declared that this fact would be accomplished in the days of the Roman Caesars, as we have already noticed, by the **God of heaven himself**, in person, and not by agencies, angelic or human. In the 44th verse it is stated that the God of heaven would set up a kingdom, which is explained in the 45th verse to be by his own sole and personal agency; "Thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands," which certainly must mean that he did not do it through created agencies, but directly; and if so, the kingdom must have been set up during his personal ministry. But Christ himself declared that he would build his church, and, therefore, it must have been founded before his ascension.

Now, unless we can find an organization called the "kingdom of God and church of Christ," set up during the three years of Christ's ministry on this earth, and unlike any organization that had preceded it, we are compelled to discredit the declarations of the prophets as well as that of Christ himself. Those who deny that the institution we call church, and kingdom of Christ, was established by Christ himself while on this earth, though they may be his professed friends, are, practically, the enemies of Christ and Christianity.

The Kingdom Set Up in the Days of John the Baptist.

Let us see what proofs there are of the establishment of a new religious institution during this period:

Luke tells us that the first proclamation of his kingdom was made in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Caesar, by a commissioned officer of the King named John the Baptist.

Mark tells us that this proclamation was the beginning of the Gospel Dispensation, and if so, John was a true Gospel minister. He was officially commissioned by Christ himself. In proof of this, Mark 1:2 refers to Malachi 3:1

> *"Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts."*

No one will question that it is Christ who speaks here. Christ (Matt. 11:10) acknowledges that John was his messenger, i.e., apostle, and he was therefore as truly a Christian minister and legal and valid officer of the government as any other commissioned officer subsequently appointed. His baptism, therefore, was in all respects equal to, and as valid as any other officer Christ subsequently commissioned, whatever may have been the design or the formula with which he baptized. He baptized in every respect as Christ commissioned him, and this divine commission made his acts valid, though he himself was unbaptized. We may as well set aside the baptisms of the seventy, or of the twelve apostles, as that of John's. To do so would evidently be to "reject the counsel of God against our own souls." In John's first address to the multitude he declared that the kingdom of heaven was "at hand," literally, "has approached," which means it was **then** and **there** present. There must have been a sense, therefore, in which this was true. It was there **authoritatively**. John was a commissioned officer of the kingdom. He was officially

charged with a message from its King. He was authorized to proclaim the terms on which pardon could be procured and citizenship secured in the kingdom, and demand submission to the coming King.

Christ, immediately after his baptism by John, made the same proclamation: "Repent ye, for **the** kingdom of heaven has approached"—the verb is in the perfect tense. It was then present in the person of its king as a **government**. When he received the people prepared by John, the kingdom was present in all that was essential to constitute a kingdom, viz., a king, subjects, government, which implies laws and locality. These subjects, together with John, received Christ as their king as well as Saviour; and they professed a hearty acquiescence in his authority as king of this kingdom, which, they understood by the prophets, he was to set up at his coming. The day that Christ received the disciples of John, he certainly possessed the **"Bride,"** and therefore John could, in truth, say, as he did, when he saw his disciples following Jesus, "He that hath the **Bride** is the Bridegroom." This term, like the "Lamb's **wife**," is but another name for his church; and I feel justified in saying that, **at this exact point** of time, in the first week of Christ's ministry, he had a visible church, and that it was composed of all who had believed on him as the Christ, and had received him as their Saviour and King. John certainly was among this number, and was, therefore, in the kingdom, or church, of which he certainly was an officer.

Meaning of Church and Kingdom.

I am **here** using church and kingdom as synonymous terms, and it is evident that this body of disciples John called the "bride," is referred to as the "kingdom of God," "of heaven," "of Christ," by all the evangelists; but so soon as like bodies of disciples were multiplied they were called churches of Christ, and no **one** of them "kingdom of God, or Christ." The explanation of this is easy. The churches of Christ are the constituencies of his kingdom—each church being the unit or integral part of the kingdom—and all the churches under one divine constitution and the sole headship of Christ, constitute the outward visible form or manifestation of Christ's kingdom on earth.

> *"Jesus Christ has a kingdom on earth and he has churches, but* ***each one is an integral portion of his kingdom.****" (A. P. Williams, D. D.)*
>
> *"The church is the visible earthly form of the kingdom of Christ, and is the divine organization appointed for its advancement and triumph. Organized and governed by the laws of the invisible King, and composed of the subjects of the heavenly kingdom, who, by the symbol of fealty, have publicly professed allegiance to him—the church [i.e., churches] fitly represent the kingdom. Hence the apostles, in receiving authority to establish, under divine inspiration, the form and order of the church, received the keys of the kingdom of heaven. Wherever they gathered disciples they organized a church, and at their death they left this [i.e., these] as the distinctive and only visible form of the kingdom of Christ on earth." H. Harvey, D. D. "The Church," pp. 24, 25.*

To make this plain to the most common reader, let me illustrate: Provinces, not individuals, are the constituents or parts of a kingdom, and these are the executives of the kingdom. A kingdom may consist of only one province. So the kingdom of Christ—"of God," "of heaven"—during the ministry of John and Christ, consisted of but **one church,** constituted of that body of baptized disciples which Christ received, from John, and those disciples which were added to them from time to time during Christ's ministry. This stage of the kingdom was the blade of the mustard **seed** just

appearing, but it was his **ecclesia**-assembly, church-as well as his kingdom. The accepted definition of a Christian church is, a body of Scripturally baptized disciples accepting Christ only as their Redeemer, his sole authority for their government, his teachings for their faith, and administering the ordinances as he delivered them.

Church Meetings Before Pentacost.

It was quite sufficient to have found the church the day it was called into existence, but it is denied that it was ever assembled while Christ was on earth. I think that several gatherings of this church are mentioned, directly or indirectly, by the evangelists.

The first full church meeting—a gathering together of his disciples into one place for general instruction—is recorded by Matthew 5:1

> *"And seeing the multitude, he ascended a mountain, and having sat down, his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying."*

These disciples were not the twelve apostles, nor yet the seventy merely, for they had not yet been chosen from the whole body, but the multitude of his disciples.

> *"The disciples, in the wider sense, including those of the apostles already called, and all who had, either for a longer or a shorter time, attached themselves to him as hearers. . . The discourse was spoken directly to the disciples," etc. (Alford, Com. in loco.)*

Here, then, was a real church meeting; a visible assembly of men, possessing certain qualifications called from the ***oklos*** (multitude) for a specific purpose, and this is the essential signification of ecclesia in Greek. We may add, an organized assembly, since they recognize the supreme authority of Christ over them. At this first general meeting of his disciples, which soon after he named his ***ecclesia***-his assembly, church—he instructed them touching their individual Christian duties, and clearly indicated their mission as his assembly—church.

> ***"Ye are the light of the world—a city set on a hill. Let your light so shine that men, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven."***

This I consider Christ's first great commission to his church, and by which he made it the great missionary agency for the Gospel enlightenment of the whole world; for it was of the whole world, he constituted his church to be the light.

Here was a church, of which Christ was the living present Head, and the source of all law and government; but as yet there were no commissioned officers, since the apostles, nor the seventy, were chosen for some time after this. (See Matt. 9:9.)

The second general gathering together of his disciples into one place was by a special summons. Luke 6:12 thus records it:

> *"And it came to pass in those days that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called [summoned] his disciples [the whole body of them] to him. And having chosen from them twelve, whom he called also apostles. . . And having come down with them, he stood on a plain, and a company of his disciples [not all in this instance] and a great multitude of people from all Judea, etc. And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples and said, Blessed are ye, poor ones; for yours is the kingdom of God."*

Those disciples at this time alone composed the kingdom of God, and it was indeed literally theirs, being entirely of them.

> *"After this (Luke x.) Christ appointed seventy others [officers], and sent them, two by two, before his face into every place whither he himself was about to come."*

It is not much to infer that after these two general meetings of the whole or main body of the disciples, and the appointment of officers, that his disciples would understand Christ should he call them his assembly—church—and as constituting the kingdom which, as Messiah, he was to set up on this earth. This was soon formally announced:

> *"And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this Rock—a stone—will I build my assembly—church—and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven," etc. Matt. 16:18-19.*

There was a kingdom and a church in existence at this time, but not as separate organizations; for the kingdom included the church and the church composed the kingdom.

Soon after this the Lawgiver delivers to his church the fundamental law for dealing with all personal offenses among the members, which has never been modified or abrogated; and the giving of this law, and the express mention of the body of his disciples as a church, puts it beyond all question that there was an organization at this time, since laws imply and necessitate organization.

The third general meeting of the brethren of his ecclesia was after his resurrection, where, at a place he appointed before his death, he met more than five hundred brethren at one time. (1 Cor. 15:6.)

The number with Christ as witnesses of his ascension is not told, but it seems that one hundred and twenty, upon their return, held a church meeting in an upper room in Jerusalem, where they, by popular vote, elected Matthias to fill the place left vacant by the death of Judas.

The body of brethren which Christ had three times gathered into an assembly, and had designated as his **church,** and spoken of as his **kingdom,** the Holy Spirit expressly calls a church, after the ascension of Christ. We have not the slightest intimation that there was the least modification made in its organization, much less that a new and unheard of body was originated by the apostles. To that organized body of disciples which Christ left, the three thousand were added by baptism on the day of Pentecost; and it was to the church then existing that the saved were added daily for some time afterward. (Acts 2:47.) The closing days of this period were marked by great activity, since it entered with the zeal of a new convert upon the work assigned it by its risen Head. The Gospel was preached, converts baptized in large numbers, and the Lord's supper observed, the doctrine of the apostles steadfastly adhered to, and brotherly love abounded. Let this be borne in mind, that before the days of Pentecost and the great revival that marked those days, a church was in existence, and that no church was organized during the days of Pentecost nor afterwards in the city of Jerusalem, and that the body of disciples gathered by Christ constituted his kingdom prior to his ascension.

The Kingdom of Christ Set Up During His Public Ministry.

Exposition of Matt. 11:12, Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence, etc.—Of Luke 16:16, All Men Press into the Kingdom of Heaven—Of Matt. 11:11, The Least in the Kingdom of Heaven Greater than John—Of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy Kingdom Come"—Objections Answered.

THESE passages at the head of this chapter, which I propose to explain, have been quite universally misinterpreted and misapplied by Protestant expositors, and their views

generally adopted by Baptists. Why the former should be the fact is easily understood when it is remembered that these passages clearly teach, if it is allowed that they teach any thing specifically, that the Kingdom of Heaven and the Church of Christ were primarily set up during the ministry of John the Baptist and Christ, and this directly militates the theory of Protestants, that the church was established in Eden, or, at least, in the family of Abraham, and that the old Jewish Theocracy was the real kingdom of Christ, and embraced the church. But why intelligent Baptists should accept this, and contend for the universal invisible church of the Protestants, is more than passing strange!

Let us carefully examine these passages, to ascertain their literal teachings, and be willing to accept them:

*Matt. 11:11 : "**Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of woman there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.**"*

There are few passages that has called out a greater diversity of opinions, or wilder ones, than this and the verse following it. To the English reader they do present insuperable difficulties.

The plain statement is that no one born of woman was greater than John the Baptist. It does not say a **greater prophet,** as some interpret it, and if it did, it is not in any sense true, for John was not a prophet—he was "more than a prophet." The burden of the prophet's messages was the events that were to come to pass in the future, but John was sent to announce and make manifest the King of his people. John was a preacher of righteousness, and the first apostle of the Christian Dispensation, and his preaching and ministry were the beginning of the Gospel of the Kingdom of Christ.

But Christ, John's Master and King, was born of a woman, and can we believe that he intended to say that John was, in any respect, greater than himself? Certainly not. So far, the way is clear. But one exception is made, an exception of either one individual or one class of persons: "Yet he that is least **in** the kingdom is greater than he." To whom can this refer if we accept this translation? Christ was by no means "the least" in the kingdom of heaven, but the greatest, being King over all. Nor can we believe that he intended to say that the least saint or infant that was then in Paradise was greater than John; for it could not have been the truth. Nor, that the youngest child or most ignorant publican or harlot then in the kingdom, or who would hereafter be in the kingdom, was greater than John; for this was not, and could never be, in any sense, the fact. How, then, must the declaration be understood? We must evidently refer to the original. The term, **mikros,** is here translated as an adjective in the superlative degree, though it has not this form in the Greek, but the comparative, and, if used as an adjective here, should be translated " less; " but this does not, in the least, remove the difficulty. To render it "least" the translators are compelled to translate the comparative degree as a superlative, and nothing is thereby gained. If it can be claimed that one degree of comparison is used for another in this place, why not as well, and far better, claim that **mikros** is used **adverbially,** qualifying "is," and not any person or class of persons, and the more so, when the sense positively demands this construction? Admit its adjective form, but give it an adverbial **signification,** and it will then read:

*"**Notwithstanding he that is later in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.**"*

The Herald preceded the king. Christ was manifest to Israel later in point of time than John; therefore, I understand him to say, that while John was greater than any man who had preceded him, nevertheless, he himself was greater than John. John, speaking of Christ, said:

> *"He that cometh **after** me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear."—Matt. 3:11.*
> *"There cometh one mightier than I **after** me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." —Mark 1:7.*
> *This is he of whom I said: "He that cometh **after** me is preferred **before** me, for he was before me."—John 1:15.*
> *"Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom ; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is **above** all; he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth; he that cometh from heaven is **above** all."—John 3:28-31.*

This translation of ***mikros*** makes Christ speak the truth, and also makes the statements of John coincide with those, of Christ. If ***mikros*** were nowhere else in the whole range of Greek literature used adverbially, it evidently is here. The facts compel us to so read it. **Both John and Christ were therefore in the kingdom.**

> *"**And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.**"— Matt. 11:12.*

By some, the phrase "**kingdom of heaven**" here is explained to mean "heaven above"— ultimate glory; and the phrases "**suffereth violence**" and "**take by force**" to mean violent exertions, etc. Some interpret the passage to teach that, for a Christian to pass through this world, overcome all obstacles, and reach the climes of "everlasting deliverance," requires the most violent efforts of vigilance, persistent fightings, etc. This may be true in fact, but not taught by the passage. Why should Christ say that it has been so difficult to get to heaven "from the days of John the Baptist," implying that it has only been difficult since his day? What was there in his preaching that obstructed the way to heaven? This interpretation is hardly admissible.

Other expositors, and perhaps most public teachers, explain that the "kingdom of heaven" here means "the grace of salvation," and "suffereth violence" means "the seeking of religion" by the sinner; and "taking it by force" alludes to the violent exertions of spirit, soul and body, on the part of the sinner, in "getting religion," as the operation is called by Arminians. Then the passage would teach that "from the days of John the Baptist until now," it has been a most difficult affair to get religion, requiring such efforts of soul and spirit as often to throw the body into the most violent contortions, convulsions, spasms and protracted comatose state. But why so difficult, and why all this bodily effort required since the days of John the Baptist, and not before? Have not sin and Satan, the human heart and the demands of God been the same in all ages? If the introduction of the Gospel Dispensation (which is a day of increased light, giving us **the meridian sunlight** for the reflected light of moon and stars, **the substance** instead of the types and shadows) has made it more difficult, then has it not been a blessing, but a curse to the race. This interpretation can not, with any show of reason, be countenanced.

What, then, does it mean? I offer the following as agreeing in all points with the other teachings of God's Word: By the phrase "kingdom of heaven" here, I

understand that visible institution which Christ came to set up on this earth; and the phrase "suffereth violence" means **to do violence to, to outrage, to treat in a ruthless and violent manner.** The Greek writers use **biazomai** in no other sense; *e. g.,* **"biazesthai ten gunaikan,** to force a woman." *(Al. Pl.* 1092, and *al.)* It never means to treat kindly, or to press toward or into in a friendly manner. By the phrase "take it by force" I understand "**to destroy,** make havoc of." The verb **harpazoo** primarily means to **"tear, snatch, ravish away;"** secondarily, "**to seize and overpower, overmaster."** I translate the whole passage:

> *"From the days of John the Baptist until now the visible kingdom of Christ has been violently assailed, and its enemies have sought to destroy or overpower it."*

This passage, properly translated, determines three facts: **1.** That Christ's visible kingdom was at that time—in the first year of his ministry—in existence; and **2.** That it was most violently opposed and sought to be destroyed by its enemies; and **3.** That this kingdom has been continuously in existence "from the days of John the Baptist until" **this day.** This passage is conclusive proof that the kingdom of Christ has been in existence from John's day until this, since **it could not have been constantly assailed unless it has continuously existed.**

If it is asked, "Why was not the 'kingdom of heaven' and church of Christ assaulted before the days of John the Baptist?" I answer, For the best of reasons: **neither existed before,** and therefore the theory that they existed in the days of Abraham or Moses is false, as is the modern theory of those who teach that they did not exist before the days of Pentecost, and were then set up, not by Christ, but by men after his ascension.

A kindred passage to the above with equal force sustains my position, and is obscured by our versions:

> *"**The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.**"— Luke 16:16.*

If it is claimed that "kingdom of God" here means "the grace of God," or "the gospel of salvation," why should Christ declare, by implication, that it has been preached only since the time of John the Baptist, when the gospel was preached to Abraham (Gal. 3:8), and the grace of God was known to all the Old Testament saints as well as to us? Christ certainly meant the visible kingdom he had set up in their midst! "The kingdom of heaven" was not preached before the days of John the Baptist, **because it did not exist before.** Will any one, familiar with the manner in which John and Christ and the gospel they preached had been treated by the overwhelming majority of the Jewish nation, say that it was true that all men pressed forward in their eagerness to embrace the gospel, and to become the disciples of Christ? How, then, could an Evangelist say, "He came to his own, and his own received him not"? (John 1:11)—*i.e.,* his own people, the Jews. Read the context in which this very passage stands, and mark the bitter opposition of the Pharisees that called it forth, and remember this sect embraced by far the larger portion of the better class of the Jews:

> *"And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things; and they derided him."— Luke 16:14.*

They had charged him with casting out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons (Luke 11:15), and Christ declared that of **that** generation the blood of all the

prophets that had been shed from the foundation of the world would be required; and the chapter closes his lament over Jerusalem, that had universally rejected his teachings.

But there is nothing in the Greek text to justify the translation, "press into it,"* but the text is against such a rendering. The preposition **eis** (into) before an accusative preceded by a verb implying violence **or** hostile intent, should be translated "against." Now, **biadzoo,** from the noun **bia,— force,—** always implies violence,— hostile intent,— as **to overpower, constrain, do violence to.** I, therefore, translate the phrase, **kai pas eis auteen biazetai,** and every one assaults, or violently opposes it.

Translated thus, this passage is in accord with its context and all the other teachings of Christ. The blood of John the Baptist had been shed, and they were even now thirsting for Christ's own blood. After a public ministry of more than three years, notwithstanding all the mighty miracles he had performed, assisted as he was by eighty efficient missionaries, all endowed with the power to work miracles in his name, and their ministry confined to the narrow limits of Palestine,— smaller than one of the States of this Union,—his disciples amounted to but a few hundred. Not one of the cities or towns of Palestine, not even the village of Bethlehem, where he was born, "the **least** among thousands of Israel," or that of Nazareth, where he was brought up, nor Capernaum, in which his mightiest works were done, was converted by all his preaching and his miracles; but, so far from pressing into his kingdom, they rejected him as an impostor, and even sought his life. The declaration of John, that "No man received his testimony" (John 3:32), and of Christ, "strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and **few** there be that find it" (Matt. 7:14), agree with the translation, "The kingdom of heaven is preached and every man is violently opposing it." **I, therefore, conclude that (1) the kingdom of Christ not only existed in the days of John the Baptist, but, (2) he was himself recognized by Christ as a member of it.**

Objections to this View Answered.

With respect to the **time** of the setting up of Christ's kingdom, foretold by Daniel, there is a strange contrariety of views held upon this subject. **1.** By Protestants generally, that Christ had a church and Kingdom from the days of Abel, or at least from Abraham until now. **2.** By others—Campbellites universally—that the Christian Church and Kingdom were not set up until the Pentecost, since Christ taught his disciples, while he was with them, to pray, "Thy Kingdom come." **3.** By others —generally "Adventists"—that the Kingdom has never yet been set up, and will not be until Christ's second Advent. **4.** Others regard the Kingdom of Christ as an invisible something—the spiritual reign of Christ in the hearts of his people. These antagonistic theories and the passages forced into their support I will briefly notice.

Had Christ a Church and Kingdom Before His Advent, A. M. 4004?

I have, in Part II. of this work, shown that there was no Church organized in Eden, or by the Covenant of Circumcision in the family of Abraham. But to close all controversy on this point forever I submit this conclusive proof:

This axiom will be admitted by all, that:

What is already in existence, God nor man can bring into existence.

All anti-Catholics will admit the force of this axiom against the doctrine of transubstantiation. Christ exists ; he can not therefore be brought into existence—be duplicated, much less multiplied a million of times. Daniel, interpreting the king's dream, (Dan. 2:42) declared that "in the days of these kings **[*i.e.,* the Caesars]** the God of heaven **would** set up a kingdom." If Christ's kingdom was then in existence, and had been since the days of Abraham or Adam, and was to continue to exist, the God of heaven could not bring it into existence. Therefore, until "the days of these kings" the God of heaven--Christ—had no kingdom on this earth; and if no kingdom, then no church, since there can be no kingdom without one or more churches, as there can be no human kingdom without a province or provinces.

1. "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

Those who urge this objection manifestly do not comprehend the petition. This prayer was taught the **disciples,** who were at that time citizens of Christ's kingdom, and none save the children of God by adoption can pray this prayer. It is to be addressed, not to Christ, but to the Father; and the petition is that **His** kingdom, not Christ's, might come, and his will be done **in this earth as it is in heaven.** This prayer has never yet been answered; but it will be, and then this earth will be a heaven —none but the sinless will inherit it. We are not to pray that this condition of things may take place in **this** Dispensation, nor in the next, for the Scriptures specifically inform us that it is not to be fulfilled until the seventh day of the World's Week, earth's great Sabbath, when ***"Christ's redeeming work is done,"*** and a new heaven and a new earth are created, in place of this, which the redeemed alone will inherit, and dwell therein forever. (See Ps. 37 and Rev. 22) It was for this glorious consummation of his Redemptive work, Christ taught his disciples then and now to pray, at which time he would give up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when all things will forever be as they were before sin entered the world, and the whole universe will be under one undivided reign. (1 Cor. 15:24-29.)

This, then, is a very comprehensive prayer, little suited to the understanding of children, if it were proper for them to use it; and certainly no unregenerated person can say, "Our Father,"—"Abba Father,"—**Our** Father who art in heaven. The reader can see that the petition does not teach that Christ's kingdom had not then come, but it is a prayer for the earth to become a heaven, and be returned to its original condition in the government of the Godhead.

Let there be no misunderstanding of this point, *i.e.,* that Christ had at this time "set up" his visible kingdom, called "the kingdom of God," "of heaven," "of God's dear Son," and that at this time, and during his ministry on earth, that body of disciples who received him as their Saviour and King, and which he called his Church—assembly—**was the visible and outward form and manifestation of his kingdom.** (See Drs. Harvey, Buck, Williams, *et mul. al.*)

2. The Spiritual Theory—"The Kingdom within us."

There are those who hold and teach that the kingdom of God, spoken of in the New Testament, so far as it is on earth and in relation to us, is the reign of grace within us, and their main text is Christ's declaration recorded by Luke 17:21:

> *"The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; and neither shall they say, Lo, here! or there! for lo, the kingdom of God is* ***within you.****"*

The difficulty arises from a wrong translation. Christ did not say the kingdom was within those wicked Pharisees, but as the Revision has it, "The kingdom of God is **in the midst of you."**

This rendering of ***entos, humoon,*** "among you," is supported by the best critics.

> *"On this interpretation, the best commentators are agreed, and adduce examples of this use of* ***entos.****" (Bloomfield.) "My kingdom is* ***among*** *you, not within you." (Alford.)*

¶And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, **The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:** {with...: or, with outward shew}
Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. {within you: or, among you}--[Luke 17:20-21 KJB and the translators notes—Ed.]

Just as consistently might Christ have said, "My church is within you;" for evidently the subject matter of that conversation was concerning his visible kingdom. The Pharisees had asked him when his kingdom would appear, which was the kingdom that both he and John had preached as "at hand"—*i.e.,* then present; and he had replied to them that the kingdom of God comes not with observation, *i.e.,* outward show, pomp or splendor; with such external appearances as to attract men's attention or admiration. So silently had it been set up, and so unlike any kingdom of this world, that they could not comprehend it.

I regard this as an explicit declaration that his kingdom was **then** existing, and on this earth.

3. Another Passage Urged Against the Visibility of the Kingdom is Christ's Declaration Before Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world," etc.

This expression can not be construed to mean that his kingdom was not **in** this world. He had said to his disciples before this:

> ***"Ye are not of this world,*** *but* ***I*** *choose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."—John 15:19.*

It was in the same sense that Christ's kingdom is not of this world. In the form of its government, in the character of its citizens, in the purity of its principles, and in its aim and its mission it is wholly unlike, and infinitely above all human kingdoms. Yet it was **upon** the earth, and he required every disciple to enter it.

4. Another much used passage is:

> *"For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."--Rom. 14:17. (Revision.)*

This evidently means nothing more than the peculiarities or characteristics of the kingdom—or churches—of Christ do not consist in observing distinctions in **meats** and **drinks,** etc., hence the injunction in Col. 2:16 :

> *"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holiday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days."*

But the end and aim of the kingdom of Christ are to promote righteousness, joy and peace in all its subjects upon earth. When the last Napoleon accepted the crown of Empire he remarked, in the hearing of the representatives of the nations, **"THE EMPIRE IS PEACE."** All understood that to maintain peace would be the end and aim of his government.

Haldane, that eminent expositor of Romans, says:

> *"This imports that the service which belongs to the kingdom of God, and which he requires from all his subjects, does not consist in abstaining from, or in using any kind of meats.* ***Men are peculiarly prone to cling to externals in religious worship.*** *It is, then, of great importance to attend to this decision of the Holy Spirit by the Apostle Paul. The distinction of meats has nothing to do in the service of God under the New Testament."*

The kingdom of God is characterized by righteousness, joy and peace ; and these are the aims and natural fruits of it.

5. Christ's Declaration to the Jews is Used to Support the Theory that the old Jewish Nation was the True Kingdom of God and Church of Christ Visible.

> *"**Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.**"—Matt. 21:43; 8:12.*

It is claimed from this passage that the old Jewish theocratic government and the church and kingdom of Christ, are one and identical, and opposed to the idea of the recent setting up of the kingdom among the Jews, since the natural inference is that they had, for a long time, been in possession of it and had abused it. I am willing to grant the Jews had been, for ages, in possession of the **typical kingdom** of God, which was but the shadow and type of the real and true visible kingdom which Christ set up; and that they had misused and abused **it,** and their guilt was, therefore, as great as though they had so treated the real, and this typical kingdom was taken from them; but this is not the meaning of this passage. The real kingdom was given to the Jews—set up in their midst—and **all its first citizens were composed of Jews.** Christ came to his own, and his own, as a people, received him not; but they put his Messenger to death, abused his servants, and finally murdered the Son and Heir. It was to be taken away from them and given to the Gentiles. This same sentence was again pronounced, by Paul and Barnabas, against the Jews at Antioch:

> *"Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said: 'It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.'"— Acts 13:46.*

Who can doubt that this has been literally fulfilled for eighteen hundred years past, and is fulfilling before our eyes to-day? God has sent upon them judicial blindness, "given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, **unto this day."** (Rom. 11:8.) If there is a Christian church in America, or the world, composed entirely of this people, I have not heard of it; nor does the Holy Spirit move the hearts of Gentile Christians to pray for the Jews.

6. The Wild, Grafted into the Good Olive Tree.

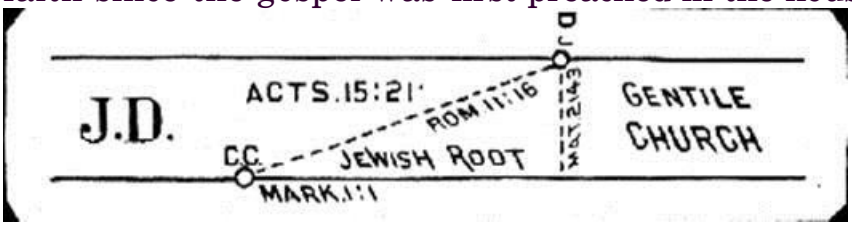
Great use is also made of Paul's olive tree illustration in support of the theory that Christ did not "set up" a new, but reformed an old church, which had been

composed of Jews for thousands of years previous. We invite attention to the careful reading of the passage and its entire connection:

> *"For if the casting away of them [the Jews] be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead? For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert graffed in among them, and with them partakers of the root and fatness of the olive tree, boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off that I might be graffed in. Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standeth by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert graffed contrary to nature, into a good olive tree; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be graffed into their own olive tree? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written: There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant with them, when I shall take away their sins."—Rom. 11:15-27.*

The idea that Paul meant the old Jewish nation, without doubt the most wicked that existed on the whole face of the earth, was the **real** church of Christ and kingdom of God, was conceived for the express purpose of supporting infant baptism. By all these it is claimed that the "good olive tree" represented the Jewish church from the days of Abraham to John the Baptist; and that, by the ministry of Christ and his apostles, the old church was reformed, the unworthy members put away, and only worthy ones received, etc. Now, for the sake of argument let it be granted, to see if it lends the cause of infant baptism and church membership the semblance of support. Why were the branches broken off? Because of **unbelief.** Then we learn that only those who exercised **personal faith** legitimately belonged to the old church--"the good olive tree;" for the reformation consisted in the breaking off **all in unbelief.** The new or reformed church consisted only of such as professed **personal faith;** for all who were grafted in stand **by faith.** According to this exposition the churches of both the Old and the New Dispensation are **churches of professed believers only;** no infants were or can be taken in upon the faith of their parents or sponsors. Thus we see the very passage brought forward to sustain, most signally overthrows the whole theory of infant baptism!

But this is not the correct exposition of this passage. The good olive tree does not represent the literal family of Abraham, or the Jewish nation, because faith was not an essential condition of membership in either the one or the other; nor has the Jewish nation been in existence for the past eighteen hundred years so that Gentiles could be grafted into it; **nor is it true that the Gentiles are ever to be grafted into it.** It can not, therefore, be said that the good olive tree represented the Christian church under the Old Dispensation; for in no sense did such a church exist. The first Christian church ever gathered was **composed of believing Jews, and Jews only.** The first gathering was the "root" of the whole tree—the "first fruit" of the lump. (See Lev. 23:16; Neh. 10:37.) Now, into this tree the Gentiles have been grafted by faith since the gospel was first preached in the house of Cornelius, while the unbelieving Jews have been rejected, and the kingdom taken from them.



--Permit me to illustrate this by a simple diagram:

J.D. represents the Jewish Dispensation. **C.C.** is where, at the preaching of John and Christ, the church and kingdom of Christ were set up. The first church was composed entirely of Jews, and the church and kingdom continued exclusively with the Jews seven years after the ascension of Christ, when Cornelius sent for Peter. **DJ** marks the time when Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews dispersed among all nations. The kingdom and church can then be said to have been taken from them and given unto the Gentiles. The "root of the good olive tree and the first fruit" were believing Jews only; and "the first fruits" of the Christian church were Jews only; and the tree with its branches, and the "lump"—the Jewish nation—is not unholy in God's sight and forever cast away. It was because of unbelief the Jews were broken off, and it was by faith that we Gentiles have been grafted in; but the day is coming when the Jews will, by faith in Christ, again be grafted in and become a part of the kingdom, even the first dominion of the kingdom of God's dear Son. The reader will see that these so oft quoted passages afford no evidence that the church and kingdom of Christ, and the Jewish Kingdom before Christ, were one and the same, but contrariwise.

From these Scriptures we learn several important facts, viz:

1. That the blindness to gospel truth that characterizes the Jewish race since the apostolic days has not been accidental, but is a judicial punishment for their inexcusable rejection of Christ and the gospel, offered them by the apostles.

2. That this blindness is not universal, but only "in part." Here and there a Jew is grafted in; but a real conversion is a rare occurrence; and, while there are entire churches of almost all other nationalities, if there is a church of this people on earth I have never heard of it.

3. That this blindness is only for a season—"until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." This "fullness" means after the full number of Gentiles Christ designs to save in this Dispensation, or the full time appointed for the gospel to be preached unto the Gentiles before the Second Advent, or it may include both ideas; but it does not mean until all the Gentiles, severally and individually, receive the gospel. Christ explains it in Matt. 24:14;

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."

4. We learn also, that, when the fullness of the Gentiles shall have been brought in through the preaching of the gospel, the Jews—all the Jews who survive the slaughter of the second conquest and sack of Jerusalem by the forces of Gog, King of the North—will embrace Christ and be saved; and, by faith, be grafted into the good olive tree—the true kingdom of Christ—with the multitudes of believing Gentiles, and thus, in Christ, constitute "one new man."

5. Finally, we learn that, when the Jews thus universally receive Christ, and are saved, the influence of the event will be like awakening the whole Gentile world from the dead.

Says Haldane on this passage:

> *"But if the casting away of the Jews was such a blessing to the world, their recall will be a blessing unspeakably greater. It will occasion a revival among the Gentile churches from a dead and almost lifeless state, which will resemble a resurrection. The numbers then converted will be as if all the dead had risen out of their graves. The Divine Dispensations being at that period so far developed, and the prophecies respecting the rejection and restoration of the Jews so fully accomplished, no doubt will any longer be entertained regarding the divine origin of the Holy Scriptures. A great additional light, too, will be thrown on those parts of them which at present are most obscure; so that, in the providence of God, the result will be an unexampled blessing both to Jews and Gentiles."*

So far from its being understood by the apostles that the kingdom of Christ—or, as it is elsewhere called, the "kingdom of heaven," "of God"— was not to be set up on the earth until after the Second Advent, they understood themselves to be in possession of it, and members of it:

> *"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which can not be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."—Heb. 12:28.*

The expression "we receiving a kingdom" is equivalent to we having received a kingdom, as the context shows: ***Echomen charin—"***let us hold fast the favor by means of which we may serve God acceptably," etc. The receiving of the kingdom was the distinguishing favor which Paul exhorted the brethren to hold fast; and they certainly could not hold fast what they did not have in possession.

There are several passages used by Adventists, and those they have converted to their views, to prove that the kingdom has not yet been set up, and will not be until Christ returns to this earth.

Among these the following:

> *And in the days of these kings will the God of heaven set up a kingdom, etc.—Daniel 2:44.*
> *And the kingdom, and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting one, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. —Daniel 7:27.*
> *And he said unto them, Verily **I** say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.—Mark 9:1.*

With reference to the first passage they claim that "these kings" refer to the ten kings symbolized by the "ten toes" of the image. Let it be granted the legs and feet symbolized the Roman empire, it has confessedly passed away, never to reappear. An empire may, and, I believe, will appear, embracing all the territory of these four

kingdoms, but it will no more be Roman than Persian,—**it will be Russian.** The kingdom **must** have been set up in the days of the Caesars, or this prophecy must remain forever unfulfilled.

The second passage refers to the kingdom in the Messianic Dispensation, when Christ and his saints will rule over all the earth.

These and other kindred passages refer not to another and different kingdom, but to a different and more glorious administration [stage or phase *-ed.*] of his present kingdom.

The little **stone** which the king of Babylon saw cut out of the mountain without hands (Dan. 2), continued until it became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. How unlike a little stone this earth-filling mountain!

And let the reader bear in mind that this self-same stone continued to exist and to increase all the time until it became a mountain. The Messianic Kingdom under the personal reign of Christ will not be, in any sense, "a little stone" or "a grain of mustard seed."

Touching the last, Christ fulfilled the promise when he took Peter, James and John into a high mountain and in vision showed them the character and glory of his future kingdom. Peter understood that this promise was fulfilled to them in that vision. (2 Peter 1:18.)

I conclude with this: If the kingdom was set up in the days of the Roman emperors,—during the ministry of John and Christ, as I have certainly demonstrated,—then it was not set up before nor since their day.

***** We submitted some years since our translations,—i.e., Matthew 11:12, Luke 16:14-16,—to Prof. J. R. Boise, D.D., LL.D., of Morgan Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, and this was his reply:

> *"Your questions suggest a new, and, to my mind, more satisfactory interpretation of Matt. 11:12. I think the clause may be rendered literally : the kingdom of heaven is treated with (hostile) violence, and violent persons are trying to ravage it '—**harposonsin**, used, **de conatu.** This meaning is certainly in keeping with the classic use of the words, and also with the verses following."*

Touching the passage in Luke 16:16, he says:

> *"The ordinary use of the words does seem to me more naturally to denote the violence of hostile forces; that of the scribes and Pharisees, which resulted in the crucifixion of our Lord. Nor can **I** see that this interpretation is inconsistent with the context, particularly that which follows in Matthew. That **eis** with the accusative may mean "against," is unquestionable. **Kai pas eis auteen biazetai** (Luke 16:16), may certainly, so far as the Greek is concerned, be rendered, 'every one is violently opposing it.' In this remark our Lord may have had in mind the rich and powerful, the leaders of society, and this thought may naturally have suggested the parable of the rich man, (Vs. 19-31.) **This view of the verses in question is adopted by Lightfoot, Schneckenberger, and Hilgenfeld."***

"THE CHURCH: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE:" *by L. L. Clover.*

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Introduction.

God created the world for His own glory (Genesis 1:1).... Man was made and God placed him in charge (Genesis 2:15). It seems that a wonderful future should and would have been man's to enjoy; but Lucifer, the great angel of light, and his host of

followers had become the Devil and demons; and they did not want to lose control of the world. But they did want to defeat the plan of God; hence the design upon man (Genesis 3:1-7).

After the fall, there came the curse, not only upon man, but upon the whole creation as well (Genesis 3:14-24). It is well to remember that God could have done any one of several things; but for reasons known only to Him, it pleased Him to set forth a plan of redemption, a buying back of that which was lost to the Devil.

Even as He pronounced the curse, He instituted the hope (Genesis 3:15). Then in Genesis 3:21 the plan is seen, not explained, but in action. Just to what extent Adam understood God's plan of redemption is not known, but that he taught it to his children is made clear in Genesis 4:3-6 and Genesis 8:20. Everything God has done since the fall, has worked toward a greater revelation and promotion of that plan. See Galatians 4:4.

Since the fall of man the activity of the Devil has not ceased, as is revealed in Genesis 6:5, which states:

> "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

Then in verse 7 God says:

> "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth."

But because the plan of God is not to be defeated in verse 8 it is stated:

> "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

Noah preserved a seed in the blood-line of the promised Savior. It was in accordance with this plan that God called Abraham (Genesis 12:1). God gave to Abraham a more complete revelation of His plan of redemption. With him He established the Covenant of Grace by faith (Genesis 17:1-8). As a result of, and in keeping with this promise, the seed of Abraham grew into, a multitude (Exodus 1:7). As the plan unfolds it is seen that God raised up a nation of the seed of Abraham to whom He could give a law, establish a system of worship; through whom He could keep His name before the world and bring the promised seed, the One who was to pay the price of redemption.

In Exodus 3:10 God is seen calling to Moses. This great man of God, the perfect type of Christ, was then sent to deliver Israel from bondage, and bring them into the land which -was given to them through their father, Abraham (Genesis 13:14-17). Still, in the furtherance of His plan, God called His people together at the foot of Mt. Sinai and gave them the law that was to rule them as a nation, direct their spiritual life, or system of worship, and point them to Christ, the promised seed that saves (Exodus 19:17 and Galatians 3:24). This was essential because the law had no power to save (Romans 3:20).

There are those who try to make Israel a part of the church; that is, they try to begin the church with Abraham. No one should think of Israel as a part of the church, but as a type of the church. Especially is this true of the tabernacle (Acts 7:38; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5; Revelation 5:10; Hebrews 8:5). Then just as the assembly of Israel and the tabernacle were types of the church, so was the offering a type of, or a shadow of, Christ on the cross.

God had a plan to redeem man and the creation; the Devil, however, stood in direct opposition to that plan. Jewish history, therefore, is the record of one sad tragedy after another; but in spite of the many spiritual failures, the division of the nation and the captivities, the Jews were brought back into the land of promise that the promised seed might be born (Galatians 4:4). When the time, God's time, had come all the devils and machinations of hell could not block the coming of the promised seed. Everything in providence from the fall of man had been in preparation of this great event. The birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ completely revealed to the world God's plan of redemption.

The student is not to forget that Jesus' coming into the world, dying on the cross, and rising from the dead marked the end of the law age and the end of the system of temple worship (Luke 16:16; Colossians 2:14-17). After the beginning of the new age, which is the "Church Age," the old system of worship which was symbolic types of shadows was no longer needed because the real thing had been revealed.

The church was neither an afterthought nor a parenthesis in the mind of God. It was in the mind of God from the beginning of His redemptive plan as Acts 15:18 reveals:

> "Known unto God are all of His works from the beginning of the world."

In Ephesians 3:9-10 it is stated:

> "And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God."

This mystery is not, as some teach and believe, only that the Gentiles should have a chance to be saved, but the entire scheme of redemption, publicized or brought before the world, through or by the church, which had become God's special agency. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown say of this verse,

> "The call of the church is no remedial afterthought, but part of the eternal scheme, which amidst manifold varieties of dispensations, is one in its end."[†]

The author is not unconscious of Ephesians 3:4-6 which says,

> "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel."

Surely the Jews knew that the Gentiles were to be partakers of salvation. Isaiah 49:6 reveals that Jesus would save the Gentile along with the Jews. However they did not know that the law age was to come to an end, and the whole system of worship was to be replaced. Furthermore they were not aware of the fact there was to be a church, the body of Christ, composed of both Jew and Gentile, and that the Gentiles would be admitted even without circumcision, on the level with the Jew.

Even Peter was not willing to go to the Gentiles with the gospel (Acts 10:10-28) until God introduced a vision; thus revealing that the Gentiles were to have the gospel and be a part of the body, the church. It is doubtful Peter ever fully understood the mystery (Galatians 2:11-13). [cf. II Peter 3:15-16.-ed.]

[†] Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Eerdman's Publishing Company. Grand Rapids, Mich., 1948. Vol. VI, Page 407.

It is an interesting and worthwhile study to follow God's method of unfolding or revealing His plan of redemption. He used Adam, Cain, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, the nation of Israel, the law, the prophets, and finally, Christ, to whom all that had gone before pointed; then the very special instruments, the church and the New Testament.

The subject of this study is the church, the reason for the church, some descriptive titles of the church, the origin, nature, and future of the church. If the student is able to understand these things the author will have accomplished his purpose. -L. L. C.

Questionable Scriptures Examined.

So far as the often quoted Dana and many, otherwise, sound Baptists are concerned, the church is positively a local congregation on earth but when it reaches heaven it will, for no reason the author can see, become universal. This theory, it seems to the author, makes God to be inconsistent; the church, in the final analysis, to be a nonentity, and removes all hope for permanent rewards. The question is often asked, "If the church is to continue, or if there is a glory church, will each local church retain her individuality in glory?"

The writer believes each local church will retain her identity in glory, [cf. Isaiah 4:5—ed.] just as each individual will retain his identity. However, the writer does not believe that each local church will be a separate unit in glory. Each of the local churches coming together will form one great assembly; the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, the glorious ekklesia. This will be the fulfillment of Christ's plan for His church as revealed in Ephesians 5:25-27, which reads:

> "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Strong says of the church:

> "The church of Christ in its largest signification, is the whole company of regenerate persons in all times and ages, in heaven and on earth."[‡]

Strong gives the following scriptures to affirm his argument: Matthew 16:18, Ephesians 1:22-23; 3:10; 5:24-25; Colossians 1:18; Hebrews 12:23.

Mr. Strong, however, presents another side of the church, or what he refers to as, "the local aspect of the church." Concerning this he says:

> "The Scriptures, however, distinguish between this invisible or universal church, and the individual church, in which the universal church takes local and temporal form, and in which the idea of the church as a whole is concretely exhibited ...The prevailing usage of the New Testament gives to the term ekklesia the second of these significations, it is this local church only which has definite and temporal existence."[§]

Dana says:

> "There are twenty-six passages in the New Testament in which the use of ekklesia presents reasonable grounds for differences of opinion in interpretation. That is to say, these passages may, with greater or less degree of plausibility, be made to conform to more than one theory of the church."[**]

[‡] Strong's Systematic Theology, The Judson Press, . Page 887.

[§] Ibid., Page 889.

[**] A Manual of Ecclesiology, Dana, Central Seminary Press, Kansas City, Kansas, 1944. Page 37.

The writer does not believe any passage of scripture can be made to conform to the universal church theory.

These questioned scriptures shall be examined one by one to see how many of them, if any, will support the universal theory. First notice is given to Matthew 16:18, which declares:

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Strong and others use this verse to establish the mystical, invisible church. Some say its only reference is to the church in the institutional sense. These writers seem to have trouble connecting this verse to any particular church. The author asks why? It has been proven that Jesus instituted the first church during His personal ministry. Even Strong admits that during the personal ministry of Jesus:

> "There was a treasurer of the body (John 13:29), and as a body they celebrated for the first time the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-29)."††

In addition to what Strong has said it is known; there was a body to which others could be added (Acts 2:47); they practiced baptism (John 4:1-2); they also had a rule of church discipline (Matthew 18:17). What more did they need to become a church? A church is a tangible thing, it exists or it does not exist. It is not a growth or a process of development from a germ or state of incipience.

There was a Church at the time Jesus spoke the words found in Matthew 16:18. Jesus Himself was the founder and builder of that church. Some seem to think this first church of Jerusalem could not be the object of this reference because within a few years it ceased to exist. This, however, is a misunderstanding of the facts as the Bible reveals them. In Acts 8:1-4 it is found that this church, "scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." Every true church has come from that first church. This is God's method of church propagation or continuance. It was a local church that Jesus built. It was this local church to whom He gave the commission. To this local church the Holy Spirit came, and through this church to all others. Thus Jesus built, and is building His church.

Matthew 18:17, shall now be examined. It declares:

"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

The reference in this verse is positively to a local church. It would be impossible to refer the erring brother to a universal, invisible church. Now since this positively refers to a local church, what reason is found to believe that Matthew 16:18 points to a universal church?

Next, Acts 7:38, is considered, which relates:

> "This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; who received the lively oracles to give unto us."

Some use this verse to substantiate the Old Testament church theory, which is but a prop for the universal theory. Yet his verse does not, in any sense, establish an Old Testament church, neither does any other verse, because there was no such thing.

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†† Strong's Systematic Theology, The Judson Press. Philadelphia, Page 901.

This verse no more proves the existence of an Old Testament church than the word ekklesia proves the Greek assemblies to be churches.

The Hebrew word "**Qahal**" meant congregation or assembly.

Qahal was translated ekklesia in the Septuagint because the two words means the same thing. So in Acts 7:38, it is the congregation or assembly of Israel; not the church, but the type of the church. [cf. 1 Cor. 10:6, 11 -Ed.]

Hebrews 2:12 is a passage that is a source of trouble to many, and some say that the reference has nothing to do with the New Testament church. The verse reads:

> "Saying, I will declare thy name to my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee."

This is a quotation from Psalm 22:22 and it does refer to the New Testament church. In Psalm 22:22 the passage is prophetic, and finds its fulfillment in Matthew 26:30. On this occasion there was a song service in the church, and Jesus was present. Since this is an irrefutable fact, why deny that this passage can have any reference to the local church?

Attention is turned to Acts 20:28 which reads:

> "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood."

This verse is a stumbling stone to many. They knew each saved one is a purchased one, redeemed, that is, bought back by the blood of Christ; so they say the church is made up of, and must include, all the saved on earth and in heaven. But this is an erroneous conception of what is taught in this verse. Though each saved one is a purchased one, it does not follow that each purchased one is a member of the church. This is a logical conclusion from the teaching of the New Testament as to the nature and function of the church. It is absurd to attempt to use this verse to establish the universal church. It is impossible for one to become a member of the church before salvation. After salvation church membership is optional or voluntary. Even Strong says:

> "The church, unlike the family and state, is a voluntary society. Membership in the church is not hereditary or compulsory."‡‡

In other words one is not born into the church, it is something to which one must present himself and ask for membership.

Furthermore, there are definite qualifications prerequisite to membership in the New Testament church. Strong admits this fact by saying:

> "The qualifications for membership.. are these: regeneration and baptism, i.e. Spiritual new birth and ritual new birth; the surrender of the inward and of the outward life to Christ; the Spiritual entrance into communion with Christ's death and resurrection, and the formal profession of this to the world by being buried with Christ and rising with him in baptism."§§

One must be saved, one must be received by the church, and one must be baptized before membership in a New Testament church. It is absurd to attempt to use this verse to establish the universal theory. It would be impossible for the bishops to oversee and feed the church of God if it were universal and invisible. Break this verse

‡‡ Ibid., Page 893.

§§ Ibid., Page 900.

down and it is found that "the church of God, which he purchased with his blood," is the church in which the Holy Spirit has made them, the subjects of Paul's address, bishops (tenders and feeders) of the flock. Now who were the subjects of Paul's address or who were the men to whom Paul spoke? In verse 17 of this same chapter it is revealed they were elders in the church at Ephesus. So, in this case, "the church of God which he purchased with his blood," is nothing more, nothing less, than the local church in Ephesus, and pop goes another universal bubble.

To claim the readers attention next is I Corinthians 12:28, which states:

> "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles..."

The universal theorists say this verse can only point to a universal, invisible aspect of the church. They say this, it seems, because the verse does not apply to the church at Corinth. It is true that the verse does not apply to the church at Corinth. However, it teaches nothing that will uphold the universal theory. On the other hand its teaching strongly indicates the church is local. It requires only a brief analysis to determine this truth. What function could apostles, teachers, etc. have in a universal, invisible church ? They could not talk of it, teach it or anything of the kind. Their function strongly indicates the thing into which they were set (the church) was something they could assemble, to which they could preach and teach; a local congregation which is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Ephesians and Colossians the word ekklesia is found thirteen times. Some scholars say that in these letters is found a view of the church which is peculiar to these epistles, and that to only two of the thirteen instances can a local meaning be attached. One thing can be said, that in no instance can a universal meaning be attached, and the writer believes the local idea is attached to each of the thirteen references. Before going into a detailed study of these passages another theory is mentioned in which Paul uses the term "ekklesia" in these epistles to represent spiritual Israel. Caution in using the term "spiritual Israel" is advised.

In Ephesians 1:22-23 it is stated:

> "And hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

Here is given a rather lengthy quotation from the Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary:

> "Put all things under (hupetaxen) `put in subjection under' (Gen. 1:28; Ps. 8:6; 1Cor. 15:27). Not only is He infinitely exalted (V. 21) but He has universal dominion. The original grant of it to man is realized for him in Christ, to the church for her special advantage. The Greek order is emphatic: 'Him (exalted and supremely glorious as He is) God gave as head over all things to the church. Had it been any one save Him, her Head, it would not have been the boon it is. But as He is Head over all things who is also her HEAD, all things are hers (I Cor. 3:21-23). He is over ('far above') all things in contrast with 'TO the church' vis., for her advantage. The former are subject; the latter is joined with Him in His dominion over them. 'Head' implies not only His dominion, but our union; therefore, while we look upon Him at God's right hand, we see ourselves in heaven (Rev. 3:21). For the Head and body are not severed by anything intervening, else the body would cease to be the body, and the Head cease to be the Head (Chrysostom). 23. which is (hetis) inasmuch as she is, His body His mystical body. Not merely figurative. He is really, though spiritually, the church's Head. His life is her life. She shares His crucifixion and His consequent glory. He possesses everything, His fellowship with the Father, His fulness of the Spirit, and His glorified manhood, not merely for

Himself, but for her, who has a membership of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones (ch. 5:30). Fulness. The church is dwelt in and filled by Christ. She is the receptacle, not of His inherent, but of His communicated plentitude of gifts and graces."***

This lengthy and perhaps confusing exegesis has been given, not that the author agrees perfectly with it, but that the student might have a more clear conception of that intricate relation of Christ to His church. The relationship of Christ to His church is spiritual, and in a sense it is ideal. **In other words there is a spiritual and an ideal significance, as well as the institutional, attached to church. But, these significations are always secondary to, and never hide, the local idea.**

These verses say three things about Christ: First, "All things have been put under His feet." Second, "He is the head of the church." Third, "The church is His body." He is the Head of the church, and the church is His body. That much is clear, but the question arises among many, what constitutes His body? The amalgamation of all the saved of all the ages, regardless of what they believed or taught, is, or will be at some future time, the body of Christ is what the universal advocates would have the student believe. This is impossible because the New Testament teaches that the church, the body of Christ, is the pillar and ground of the truth. [1Timothy 3:15]

The best rule of scripture interpretation is to let scripture interpret scripture, remembering that all scripture must harmonize. Now when this rule is applied here and this question is brought into the light of 1 Corinthians 1:2; 12:27, one will find that the body of Christ is the local church. Perhaps some will object, saying, one head, many bodies. This objection will be offered because of a failure to understand that the language or the terminology is metaphorical. There are many metaphors to be found in the Bible; such as, "lamb of God," "bride of Christ," "body of Christ," "I am the vine," "ye are the branches," etc. Webster defines the word metaphor as: "A figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another by way of suggesting a likeness, or analogy between them, as the ship plows the sea, a volley of oaths." Even so, the words "bride" and "body" are applied to the church to reveal the close relation between the church and Christ.

That there is mystery involved in this relationship, the writer would be foolish to deny; but there are also many other mysteries that cannot be explained; for instance the omnipresence of God. God said of husband and wife:

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Ge. 2:24). [cf. Proverbs 30:18-19; Leviticus 20:11, 20-21 ~Ed.]

Paul speaking of this verse said:

"This is a great mystery:" (Ephesians 5:32).

Jesus said:

"**Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.**" (Matthew 18:20).

Who can explain these things? Shall it be said that because our explanations are inadequate these things are not true? Think of a grape vine, row after row, vine after vine, each vine producing fruit, each fed the same food and from the same source: but each a separate and distinct entity complete within itself. The writer has never heard

*** Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Eerdman's Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1948. Vol. VI, Page 402.

anything about a big universal, invisible, mystical grape vine. Jesus on one occasion referred to the fruit of the vine (Matthew 26:29). Does any person suppose He was referring to a big universal vine composed of all the little vines both wild and tame? The utter foolishness of this suggestion is plain, even to a child. Then why not see the absurdity of the universal church theory?

Looking next to Ephesians 3:10, these words are found:

> "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

The George Ricker Berry interlinear, gives the following translation of this verse:

> "That might be known now to the principalities and the authorities in the heavenlies through the assembly the multifarious wisdom of God."†††

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown say of the verse:

> "Through the church, the theater for displaying God's wisdom (Luke 15:10; 1Corinthians 4:9) the mirror in which angels contemplate it . . ."‡‡‡

What in this verse points to a universal church? Emphatically nothing! The verse simply tells the student that from eternity the Lord had chosen the church, the instrument through which, in this age, He was to work in the world. The mirror through which to reveal His great wisdom, power, and plan of salvation, even to the angelic host. Furthermore, this verse implies that great responsibility rests upon the church to maintain a oneness of teaching, a regulated system of doctrine and a strict adherence to the teaching of the New Testament. These thoughts lead the student back to 1 Timothy 3:15, which declares the church to be the pillar and ground of the truth. Anything less than that could hardly reflect God, in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow made by turning (James 1:17) to the world much less to the great angelic host. This verse then, rather than promoting the universal theory, deals it a death blow.

Next to be examined is Ephesians 3:21, which states:

> "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end."

This verse is approached now to see if it has a universal connotation, or any significance other than the spiritual and ideal. It is to be noticed first, that this epistle was written to the church at Ephesus. It is possible that it was a circular letter (Galatians 1:2, Colossians 4:16) to be read in several churches. However, that makes little difference because they were each local churches. In other words Paul was addressing himself to the local church. With this thought in mind, reading nothing into the verse that is not there, not turning from the light shed by other passages, what can be found? Simply that **the church is the personal instrument or organization, instituted by Christ Jesus; anointed by the Holy Spirit, ordained of God, through which God will keep His name, His glorious plan of redemption, and His system of doctrines before the world**. Further-more, it is the agency or medium through which God will receive glory, ages without end. Now which church is it that is the object of Paul's address? Is it a large universal, invisible church the Bible knows nothing about? No! Each local church is that

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††† The Greek New Testament Interlinear, Geo. Ricker Berry, Wilcox & Follett Co., 1954. Page 505.

‡‡‡ Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Eerdman's Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1948. Vol. VI, Page 407.

particular church, the theater for the manifestation of that wonderful plan of salvation effected by Christ and offered to the people of this dispensation; the glory of which belongs to God and will be received by Him through the local church. Some seem to think the church will come to an end in the heaven age. This theory will not harmonize with the following verse of scripture.

Ephesians 5:23-32 reads:

> "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be unto their own husbands in everything . . . Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it: ...That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word . . . That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be Holy and without blemish . . . So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church . . . For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones ... For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

There is some controversy as to the teaching of these verses. Some insist Paul is using the husband-wife relation to show the Christ-church relation; that these verses prove the church is the bride of Christ. Others declare Paul is using the attitude of Christ toward the church to illustrate the attitude the husband ought to have toward the wife. Regardless of what the verses teach relative to these things, it in nowise changes some of the plain statements such as "Christ is the head of the church"; "The church is the body of Christ." There is an intricate and inexplicable oneness involved in both the husband-wife relationship and the Christ-church affinity which, even Paul says is a great mystery.

In what sense are to be taken the words "the church?" Is it the institutional, the local, or the universal? Many say the universal, but Dr. L. D. Foreman has well said:

> "If these verses teach a universal church they also teach a universal wife."[§§§]

Dr. Foreman believes the words "the church" are used here in the institutional sense, with which the author agrees, but the local sense is neither lost nor hidden. In fact, **the local aspect of the church is very apparent in every reference to the church.** But the age old question comes, which church is the bride of Christ?; of which church is Christ the head?; which church is the body of Christ? It can be answered with another question, i.e. of which wife is the husband the head? When there is an answer to the last question there can also be an answer to the first. How can Christ be the head of each local church? How can each local church be His bride? This is not known; neither is it known how the Holy Spirit, a person, can dwell in the heart of each saved person on earth. No more mystery is attached to one than the other.

Attention is now directed to Colossians 1:18, which declares:

> "And He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning: the firstborn from the dead: that in all things He might have the preeminence."

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§§§ Bible in Eight Ages, Foreman, Seminary Baptist Press, Little Rock, Ark.

The universalist's argument is that since this verse does not refer to a particular church, as 1 Corinthians 12:27, no local meaning can be attached to it. There is the same argument on Verse 24, which reads:

> "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church."

Though it is true Paul does not follow these statements with the declaration that the church at Colosse is the body of Christ, neither did he say "for His body's sake, which body ye are." But does it suggest, even remotely, that the church at Colosse was not the body of Christ? Does a Bible truth once established, as 1 Corinthians 12:27, need to be invariably repeated? Rather, when a Bible truth is once established all other Scripture must harmonize with it. Many passages seem to be dark and very confusing until brought into the light of definitely and positively clear statements. (Then why should the student go out into the infinite and mystical trying to find an explanation for these verses that will harmonize with all of the scholars? The scholars are not agreed among themselves on many different subjects. For example, if one tries to please them all one will have to accept evolution, the universal brotherhood of man, and deny the virgin birth of Christ. But at the same time one will have to reject evolution, deny the universal brotherhood of man, and accept the virgin birth of Christ. These are just a few of the paradoxes to be found if one tries to go along with all the scholars[cf. Deut. 29:29.-ed.]).

The ekklesia of these passages could not mean the great invisible aggregate of all the saved. If so the Scripture would be contradicting itself because these passages would fail to harmonize with the eighty-five scriptural references which point to the church as a local body. Neither do these passages refer to spiritual Israel, but rather to the local church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Some one must always ask; how many bodies, how many wives, does the Lord have? When one finds how many churches He has he will have the answer. Many object and cry "impossible" "plurality" "polygamy" and "impossible to understand." It must not be forgotten that the terminology is metaphorical, and it is not ours to understand, but to believe. When one tries to understand the eternal God; who had no beginning and no ending, when one tries to understand the omnipresence of God it will cause the mind to stagger. But one thing is known, when all of the churches have been brought together in the resurrection there will be but one body, one bride. **It will not be made up of all the saved, but of all the local churches of Jesus**.

There are yet a few scriptures that are used to argue the universal theory. These shall be examined and the first to claim the readers attention is Romans 16:23, which states:

> "Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you."

This verse is supposed to teach that Gaius made all of the Christians welcome when they came to Corinth, thus he was the host of the great mystical and invisible church. The language of the verse is very simple and so is the statement, "Gaius mine host, and of the whole church." Even a child can see how utterly impossible it would have been for Gaius to be host to a great universal, invisible church composed of all the saved of all the ages both living and dead. At the time Paul wrote these words many

churches had no meeting place except in private homes. Thus they were referred to as "the church in thy house." So it is only logical to believe that Gaius was accommodating this particular church in his home.

Next in order is 1 Corinthians 6:4, which admonishes:

> "If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church."

If the student will study the context of this verse, he will find that the reign or the judicial aspect of the church is future. Therefore, the immediate application is to the church in Corinth, rather than to an ecclesiastical body, which alone has the ability and the right to execute judgment.

1 Corinthians 10:32 urges:

> "Give no offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God."

If this statement were found in any epistle other than 1 Corinthians, the universal theologians would make much of it. However, since it is in this epistle, and in chapter 1, verse 2, the explicit declaration, "to the church of God at Corinth," is found, there is very little that can be said. Therefore, it was the church of God at Corinth, to whom they were to give no offence.

The following four verses are of no special value to the universal theorist, however, they are sometimes used in attempt to bolster the theory.

> "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God." (1 Corinthians 15:9).
> "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jew's religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God and wasted it." (Galatians 1:13).
> "Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless." (Philippians 3:6).
> "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison." (Acts 8:3).

The word church as used in these verses refer so clearly and distinctly to the church at Jerusalem they require no comment.

The verse that is to follow properly belongs with the four quoted above. However, since there is some question concerning its reference to the church, it is listed, and shall be discussed, separately.

> "Then had the churches (church) rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." (Acts 9:31).

This verse had to do with the period after the conversion of Paul when the church had rest from persecution. The records show only one church, the church at Jerusalem, which Paul persecuted. In fact, the records reveal no church other than the one at Jerusalem until the one at Antioch was established.

The argument, concerning this verse, set forth by the universal theorist seems to center around the word "church" singular, and the word "churches" plural. The King James version has "churches" the Revised Version, "church." Most scholars seem to believe the word should be rendered "church" singular. For example A. T. Robertson says:

> "The singular ekklesia is undoubtedly the true reading here (all of the great documents have it so). By this time there were churches scattered over Judea, Galilee and Samaria (Galatians 1:22) but Luke either

regards the disciples in Palestine as still members of the one great church at Jerusalem ... or he employs the term ekklesia in a geographical or collective sense, covering all of Palestine. The strict local sense we have already seen in 8:1 and 3 and Matthew 18:17 and the general Spiritual sense in Matthew 16:18. But in Acts 8:3 it is plain that the term is applied to the organization of Jerusalem Christians even when scattered in their homes."[****]

W. O. Carver says:

"The church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace. The church still includes all believers in the whole of Palestine. Either, as Baptist and other democratic denominations hold, the development of independent, local organizations had not yet arisen, or the term is applied in a general sense to include all believers in this territory. In Galatians 1:22, referring to this same period, Paul speaks of the churches of Judea, which lends color to the second interpretation. Still it may well be, as many Baptists (Broadus, et al) have held, that Paul speaks from the standpoint of his writing several years later, while Luke speaks here from the standpoint of the fact at this time. In this view the differentiation into churches took place between the two dates. We must remember that throughout the New Testament period churches included in their organizations more territory and more people than later custom provided. Always the disciples of a city and the surrounding territory seem to have remained in a unified single church organization, however, many centers of worship and service may have been needed."[††††]

Strong says:

"Broadus in his commentary on Matthew, page 359, suggests that the word ekklesia in Acts 9:31 denotes the original church at Jerusalem, whose members were by the persecution widely scattered throughout Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and held meetings wherever they were, but still belonged to the original organization ... When Paul wrote to the Galatians, nearly twenty years later, these separate meetings had been organized into distinct churches, and so he speaks, Galatians 1:22, in references to that same period, of the churches of Judea which were in Christ."[‡‡‡‡]

Brown, of Jamieson, Fausset and Brown say :

"Then had the churches.-But the true reading here seems to be 'The Church' which Lachmann and Tisschendorf adopt, (and DeWette, Alford, and Lechler approve, though not Meyer). Indeed, it is hardly conceivable that churches in any proper sense of the term, should have been formed this early throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria."[§§§§]

At the time of the great persecution (Acts 8:1-4) the biblical records reveal no hint of any church other than the one at Jerusalem. Of this period Carver says:

"Saul of Tarsus will be a great leader of the effort to put down the church. As yet there is but one church. No differentiation into groups in the various cities has been made. All Christians thus far are in the one Jerusalem group."[*****]

Acts 8:3 shows Paul entering upon his career of hate and persecution of the Christians. Acts 8:4 tells that the Christians were scattered abroad, by this persecution, and went everywhere preaching the word. Verses 5-40 of the same chapter give a word picture of the great work done but nothing is heard about a new church until the church at Antioch. This persecution could not have extended more than three or four years, so with Brown, of Jamieson, Fausset and Brown the author agrees:

[****] *Word Pictures in the New Testament; A. T. Robertson, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1930. Vol. III, Page 128.*

[††††] *The Acts of the Apostles, Carver, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tenn., 1916. Page 101.*

[‡‡‡‡] *Strong's Systematic Theology, The Judson Press, . Philadelphia. Page 892.*

[§§§§] *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Eerdman's Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1948. Vol. VI, Pages 62-63.*

[*****] *The Acts of the Apostles, Carver, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tenn., 1916. Page 79.*

"It is hardly conceivable that churches in any proper sense of the term, should have been formed this early throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria."†††††

After letting the light of all the evidence shine upon this controverted verse, it seems positively certain the church at Jerusalem, with her scattered constituents, was the church referred to as having rest from persecution. Subsequent Baptist history in America reveals a similar circumstance. The records show that the Pennepack Church was instituted by Elias Keach, 1688, in Pennepack, or Lower Dublin, Pa. The records further reveal this church had constituent groups or congregations in Trenton, Chester and other small towns in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. In later years these constituent congregations were organized into churches.

The readers attention is now directed to the much controverted, and indeed hard to understand, Hebrews 12:18, 22-23, which states:

"For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest ... But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."

Before entering into a study of these verses a few quotations from the scholars shall be given. The American Commentary says:

"And to an innumerable company...And to myriad ones, a festal host of angels, and a congregation of firstborn ones, who are registered in heaven. Such is, perhaps, the best construction of these difficult and disputed words."‡‡‡‡‡

A. T. Robertson says:

"To the general assembly (Panegurei). Old word (from pas and aguris, agerio). Here only in N.T. Panegurizo occurs in Isaiah 66:10 for keeping a festal holiday. Possibly to be connected with aggelon, though not certain. Church of the firstborn (ekklesiai Prototokon). Probably an additional item besides the angelic host as the people of Israel are called the firstborn (Exodus 4:22). The word ecclesia here has the general sense of all the redeemed, as in Matt. 16:18; Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:24-32, equivalent to the kingdom of God. Who are enrolled in heaven (apogegrammenon en ouranois). Perfect passive participle of apographo, old verb to write off, to copy, to enroll as in Luke 2:1, 3, 5 (only N.T. example). Enrolled as citizens of heaven even while on earth (Luke 10:20; Phil. 1:27; 3:20; 4:3; Rev. 8: etc.). To God the judge of all (kritei theoi panton.)"§§§§§

William R. Newell says:

"Literally the greek of verses 22-24 reads, But on the contrary ye are come to mount Zion and to the assembly of firstborn ones enrolled in heaven and to God judge of all and to spirits of righteous ones perfected and to Mediator of new covenant, Jesus and to blood of sprinkling speaking better than (the blood) Abel."******

Charles B. Williams Translation says:

"But you have come to mount Zion, even to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless host of angels, to the festal gathering and assembly of God's firstborn sons enrolled as citizens in heaven, to a judge who is the God of all, to the spirits of upright men who have attained perfection." ††††††

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††††† *Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, Eerdman's Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1948. Vol. VI, Page 63.*

‡‡‡‡‡ American Commentary on the New Testament, American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia. Vol. VI, Page 176.

§§§§§ Word Pictures in the New Testament, A. T. Robertson, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1930. Vol. V, Page 440.

****** Hebrews Verse by Verse, William R. Newell, Moody Press, Chicago.

†††††† The New Testament, Charles B. Williams, Moody Press, Chicago, 1954. Page 503.

The Pulpit Commentary says:

"The Jewish church was shut out from intercourse with the rest of the world; but our fellow citizens under the new Covenant are: (1) The Holy Angels: Myriads of Angels, a festal assembly, the celestial hierarchy. (2) The saints on earth: the church of the firstborn who are enrolled in album of heaven. Israel was mustered and numbered at Sinai; and so the New Testament Church although dispersed all over the world, forms but one society of firstborn ones, each of whom is a prince of the blood of God. (3) The believers of the ancient church: the spirits of just men made perfect. The disembodied souls of the Old Testament saints could not be made perfect, apart from us, chapter 11:40, and thus we now form one brotherhood with them, as well as with departed believers who lived in Christian times. . .‡‡‡‡‡‡

Dr. Dana says:

"The plain unstrained interpretation is to understand the author as meaning that the redeemed in Christ have direct access to the very glorious presence of God, surrounded by hosts of angels in their festal gathering as an assembly of enrolled citizens of the heavenly city. The desire to depict a church in glory appears to be the chief reason why many interpreters overlook this plain meaning and as a result involve the passage in intricate difficulties..."§§§§§§

Thus is presented, in substance, what most of the commentators say in interpreting these verses. The student will not overlook the fact the commentators unanimously interpret the word church to mean all the saved of all the ages. It is well, however, to remember first, though a man has written a commentary and is found to be right in many things, it does not follow that he is infallible. He is still a man and subject to error. Second, most of the commentators are members of man-made churches. If the church of the Lord Jesus Christ does not include all of the saved then many people, including the commentators, have no part in it. This is not a pleasing prospect, therefore many efforts are made and many interpretations are strained, in an attempt to prove the church is composed of all the saved of all the ages.

A consideration of this entire letter is very important to a comprehensive study of these verses. This letter was written to Hebrew Christians. The purpose was to convince the Hebrews of the excellence and superiority of Christ and the church age over Abraham, Moses and the old dispensation of law, circumcision and ceremony. In other words this letter is related to the Jewish problem of the new dispensation.

The student will remember there were three mountains outstanding in the mind of any Hebrew. First, there was Mount Moriah, upon which Abraham was instructed to offer his son in sacrifice to God (Genesis 22:2). Mount Moriah was again the place of sacrifice, after David had sinned against God by numbering the people (1 Chronicles 22:1). It was upon Mount Moriah that Solomon built the great temple (2 Chronicles 3:1). Second, was Mount Sinai; the place where God came down to the people in fire and smoke, typical of judgment (Exodus 19:16-18). Third, was Mount Zion; this is the higher hill in Jerusalem, the place where David dwelt after he had overthrown the Jebusites (2 Samuel 5:6-9). Upon the return of our Lord, the tabernacle of David shall be built again (Acts 15:16-17). Mount Zion is to be the site of the great millennial temple (Isaiah 2:2-3; Micah 4; Psalm 48; Psalm 68:15-35). The last nine chapters of Ezekiel give a word picture of this great temple.

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‡‡‡‡‡‡ *Pulpit Commentary.*

§§§§§§ *A Manual of Ecclesiology, Dana, Central Seminary Press, Kansas City, Kansas, 1944. Page 66.*

The Jews were familiar with the prophetic future of Mount Zion; therefore to them it represented freedom, joy, and a great outpouring of grace. So the writer of the Hebrew letter, taking advantage of their knowledge, in substance, says: "you, that have believed unto salvation, have not come to Mount Sinai, as did your fathers, the mountain of fire, smoke, fear and great trembling which was typical of bondage and judgment: but you have come to Mount Zion, the place of grace and freedom from fear and judgment (Romans 8:2). You have come to the heavenly city, the eternal Jerusalem, of which the earthly Jerusalem was only a type, And to an innumerable company of angels (Revelation 7:11-12) to the general assembly and church of the firstborn." In other words the writer of this epistle is trying to make these Hebrew Christians conscious of the fact they have passed from the old dispensation of legalism (Galatians 3:13, 24-25) into the glorious age of grace and freedom.

Albert Barnes expresses the aim of the inspired writer when he says:

> "By the phrase 'ye are come,' the apostle means that this was the characteristic of the new dispensation, that it conducted them there, and that they were already, in fact, inhabitants of that glorious city. They were citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem (Phil. 3:20) and were entitled to its privileges."*******

Thus the purpose of the inspired writer is clearly seen, but what do the verses teach relative to the church? Do they reveal a great and final gathering of a universal church? The word 'ekklesia' seems to be used here in its common classical sense of 'assembly.' It would be impossible, however, to prove the church is universal on that evidence, because the local church is an assembly. The scholars do not agree as to what the word, in these particular verses, teaches. Some of them seem to believe the word ekklesia points to both the angels and redeemed, of all the ages, in one festal gathering which is to be a future realization. Others seem to believe it points to the future gathering of all the redeemed around the throne of God. Still others believe the word refers only to the redeemed on earth who are, though still on earth, enrolled in heaven. Thus the scholars do not give conclusive proof but rather confuse the student. Nevertheless, a careful study of the verses will reveal they present no just cause for confusion.

The students attention is again directed to the purpose of the inspired writer. Here, it seems, is to be found the key which opens the door of understanding to the otherwise mysterious statements. In the attempt to show these Hebrew Christians the superior blessings and privileges of the new dispensation the writer makes the emphatic declaration, "ye have come." It is well for the student to remember these statements are all in the present perfect tense. These people had passed from the old dispensation, with its priesthood, carnal ordinances, and the veil which stood between them and the mercy seat; all of these things were limited to types and shadows. In this age from which they had just passed they were shut up to the blessings which were theirs to enjoy in the new age. Galatians 3:23, states:

> "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed."

Hebrews 9:7-10, declares:

> "But into the second *went* the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people: The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all

******* *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1956.*

was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing: Which *was a* figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience; *Which stood* only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed *on them* until the time of reformation."

They had come, that is, passed into the age which brought them, as priests (1 Peter 2:5, 9) to the very throne of God. Hebrews 7:19 reads:

"For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God."

Romans 5:2 declares:

"By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Hebrews 4:16 reads:

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Thus they had come to the great festal assembly of angels gathered around the throne of God; to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to the church of the firstborn. In brief, this is the summing up of the blessings and special privileges that accrue to those of the new dispensation.

The church is the very center of the new dispensation even as the nation of Israel with her system of worship was the center of the old. The church is God's official representative on earth in this age, as Israel was His official representative on earth in the old. The world has received the New Testament through the church, and Jesus said the church was the salt of the earth and the light of the world. The Holy Spirit gave us a strong hint that she is the bride of Christ (2Corinthians 11:2) **to further honor the church and show her importance the Holy Spirit said: "Ye shall judge angels"** (1 Corinthians 6:2-3).

Realizing the preeminence of the church in this dispensation which is many times referred to as the 'church age,' and keeping the purpose of the inspired writer in mind, one cannot fail to see the propriety of this reference; "ye are come ... To the general assembly and church of the firstborn . . ." It makes little difference whether the word is used in the classical or the institutional sense, it's place in the reference would be the same.

The primary purpose of the inspired writer is not to depict a future gathering, but to make these Israelites know that, among other blessings and privileges received, they had been permitted to see; and the writer believes, to become a part of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some, perhaps, will object to the argument that the blessings mentioned by the inspired author of the epistle are present blessings. These objectors seem to believe the references are to blessings and privileges which cannot be realized before the heaven age begins; thus they attempt to make the church universal in the heaven age. However, where facts begin arguments must end: the statements, "ye have not come . . . ye have come" are in the present perfect tense in both cases.

The writer understands that the glories of these blessings cannot be fully realized on earth. Paul said:

> "But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."- 1Corinthians 2:9

That, however, does not alter the fact these are present possessions. They have their beginning here and their consummation in the heaven age. In other words the writer of this epistle in one grand scope of vision carries these Hebrew Christians from the present through the resurrection, the millennial reign with Christ, and the beginning of the heaven age.

Some who are so urgent in their desire to establish a universal church will object to the argument that these Hebrews were members of a church. Despite the objections it seems in all probability they were church members. They had received the gospel from Christ, or through the church, and it seems only reasonable that in either case they would have been church members. Then in chapter 10:25, they are told not to forsake the assembling of themselves together. This verse, so far as the writer knows, has never been thought to apply to anything but a New Testament church.

In recapitulation it can be said; **every Scripture in the New Testament that pertains to the church has been examined and not one has been found that will uphold the universal church theory.** The etymology of ekklesia in both its classical and Septuagint usage proves the word to have only one meaning; **'local.'** The usage of the word in the New Testament proves that the Holy Spirit meant for His readers to understand the ekklesia to be a local body. Finally, our Lord's choice of the word proves that He meant for His people to understand His ekklesia to be a local congregation. These are facts neither wishful thinking nor oratorical argument will be able to refute.

Why Some Hold the Universal Theory.

Why is the universal church theory the prevalent theory? It is a well known fact that almost all of the scholars believe that the church is made up of all the saved of all the ages, but why? The writer thinks it easy to understand why the average person will believe that one church is as good as another, and that all saved people belong to the church. They believe it for the same reason people believed the world was square; because it seems reasonable. The average person has nothing but a superficial knowledge of the Bible and they are excusable, perhaps, on that ground. But why will the scholar, with his historical and linguistical Bible training, believe it? If it could be proven all the scholars were dishonest it would be understood, but this cannot be done for many of them are sincere in what they believe and teach.

The big question 'why,' is still unanswered unless the reader will consider the Devil, his attitude and his tactics. Bringing the Devil in to help establish a fact will not be thought scholarly. Nevertheless, the writer is not ashamed, because God in the book of all books has warned men of the Devil's purpose and power. 1 Peter 5:8, Revelation 20:10, Genesis 3, and Matthew 4, will reveal to any student of the Word that the Devil can do much to control men's thinking, and that the Word is the very thing he uses, many times, to accomplish his purpose. In fact, the Bible, from Genesis

through Revelation, is one continuous display of the Devil's activity in his efforts to defeat the plan of God. He has left nothing undone; he has not failed to exercise any effort that might hinder the cause of the Lord Jesus. Then, since the church is the pillar and ground of the truth, it is not surprising to find the Devil making every effort possible to destroy the church. The universal church theory is his greatest masterpiece; it is the nearest thing to a deathblow that he has been able to deal the church. Someone has well said,

"The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church."

So the Devil instituted the universal theory and today, so far as the world is concerned, the church is nothing more than a name, and the truth is anything one wants to believe. Salvation is thought of as a system of ethics, having its roots in sociology rather than in Bible truth. Every member of a man made church must somehow justify himself, and men searching for self-justification will grasp at a straw. The universal theory is that straw; the great panacea, covering all the errors, and justifying all the man-made institutions which call themselves churches.

History.

This study of the local church would not be complete without at least a passing glance at what the early writers, in the first and second centuries, had to say in regard to the church.

The first of the ancient writers to claim our attention is Clement, the author of "The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians." This book was written approximately …, A. D. 95 to 97. It is an epistle from the church at Rome to the church at Corinth. It was presented to King Charles I by Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, and is now in the British Museum. In the English translation is found the word "church" six times. Chapter 1:1 states:

> "The church of God which is at Rome, to the church of God which is at Corinth ...", †††††††

Clement thought of the church as local. It should be recognized that Clement was a disciple of Peter, and later became bishop (pastor) of the church at Rome. In the introduction to the epistle it is stated that Jerome says he was an apostolical man, and Rufinus says, he was almost an apostle. Eusebius calls this the wonderful epistle of St. Clement, and says that it was publicly read in the assemblies of the primitive churches. The purpose in writing the epistle was the correction of certain seditions which had arisen in the church at Corinth, but it is not even hinted that the pastor, or the church in Rome had any authority whatsoever over the church at Corinth. The position assumed by Clement was admonitory and advisory. The epistle is from one local church to another local church with not the slightest suggestion that the church in Rome failed to recognize the sovereignty of the church in Corinth.

These words are found in Chapter 5:

> "Through zeal and envy, the most faithful and righteous pillars of the church have been persecuted even to the most grievous deaths."‡‡‡‡‡‡‡

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††††††† *Anti-Nicene Fathers, Eerdman's Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1953. Vol. I.*
‡‡‡‡‡‡‡ *Ibid.*

It is an outstanding fact that an honest and sincere study of the early writers will reveal that they thought of the church as one, in doctrine and in purpose, the pillar and ground of the truth. But with none of the writers had the local church lost her identity. That fact is obvious from the writings of Augustine, who is designated as the father of Roman Catholicism. (Catholicism had existed in germ before Augustine). Since there existed only one system of teaching and all the teachings came through the various churches, it is easy to understand why they would think of the churches as one universal church, even to the extreme. Since there were no saved people, at least very few, that did not belong to the churches the conclusion that none could be saved outside the church was logical. Despite these theological vagaries, they did not use the word universal in the sense that it is used by our modern theologians. **The author feels if it is possible to prove anything, he has proven both by the Scriptures and the early writers that the ekklesia is not a universal, invisible, mystical body but a local body.**

Eschatology.

Since the fall of man and the corruption of creation by sin, God has had a plan for the salvation of man and the subjection of all things unto Himself. This plan manifestly centers in Christ. Its revelation, its progress, and its consummation are all linked with Him.

The church, as the body of Christ, is the great and final instrument that Christ is using in this last age in the consummation of His plan or the work which His Father has given Him to do.

That this age (the church or Gentile age) shall come to an end is known. That the second coming of Christ will manifest the end, all orthodox scholars agree. The second coming is an established fact. No other event is more clearly revealed by scripture.

THE BLADE, AND THE EAR, AND THE FULL CORN: *by J. R. Graves.*

Excerpt from ***"The Dispensational Expositions of the Parables and Prophecies of Christ"***, (1887)

The Gradual Development of Christ's Kingdom.

"And he said, **So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.**"—Mark 4:26-29.

That this parabolic gem, so natural and so significant, should be recorded only by Mark is "one of the surprises of gospel history;" but it does not militate either its "genuineness or importance."

Of this parable Dr. Bruce, of Scotland says: "The law of growth in the spiritual world, not being duly laid to heart, has, therefore, not been found here, and this parable consequently has been misinterpreted, or rather scarcely interpreted at all. Few of our Lord's parables have been more unsatisfactorily expounded, as there are few in which a right exposition is more to be desired for the good of believers" (*Parabolic Teachings, p. 120.*)

This expositor verifies the truth of his own assertion by interpreting this parable, at great length, as teaching the growth of grace in the souls of Christians; in other words, that sanctification is a gradual growth, and, in trying to conform it to the laws of growth in the natural world, he altogether misses, I think, what Christ intended and does manifestly teach by this parable, Indeed, Dr. Bruce frankly confesses that he has limited its application to the individual Christian's experience rather than to the history of the kingdom of God at large, its real scope, and his apology is because he understands the former better than the latter. So disingenuous is his admission, and so applicable his reason to other commentators, that I quote him verbally here:

> *"And here we shall confine ourselves to the experience of the individual, though sensible that the history of the kingdom of God at large is a far greater theme than that of any individual Christian, and ready to admit that it* ***was probably the former*** *which our Lord had chiefly in His thoughts when he uttered the parable. Our apology for restricting our inquiry to the minor subject is, first, that we* ***understand it better.****"*—Bruce, p. 133

Let the reader mark this writer's statement, which I accept as true, viz,: that "our Lord had **the history of His kingdom at large** chiefly in His thoughts when He uttered this parable." Had he said wholly in His thoughts, it would have been nearer the exact truth for this is what He explicitly declared the parable was intended to illustrate, viz.: that the growth of His kingdom would be **slow** and by marked stages from its origin to its final and glorious consummation, like unto that of a seed of corn from its planting to its final development—the full corn in the ear. But, amazingly strange, although this is so clearly stated by Christ as the true and only scope of the parable, commentators so generally, Dr. Bruce not excepted, ignore it, and even base their interpretations upon a single and confessedly mistranslated text of Scripture! (Luke 17:20-21.) Christ's kingdom, composed, as it is, of His visible local churches, could not be in the hearts of those wicked and murderous Pharisees, either in its literal or spiritual, its physical or figurative, senses. It was among them or in their midst, although they did not discern the fact; and this is undoubtedly what Christ said. At another time He said, "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you."[Matthew 12:28] I can recall no passage in the Sacred Scriptures where it is taught or intimated that Christ's kingdom ever was or ever could be in the hearts of saints or sinners. Paul does, in one place, say that "the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit;"[Romans 14:17] but this is manifestly an elliptical sentence for the **fruits** of the kingdom—its aim and the natural result of its rule. We all know that the apple is not the tree, nor the grape the vine, that produces it. The third Napoleon, in the fete given at his coronation, said, for the ear of the foreign diplomats, "The empire is peace." certainly did not mean that the French government was either literally or figuratively peace, but that its aims would be to secure peace with all nations.

I regret to say that one of our own recent and valued commentators of the New Testament thus briefly explains the scope of this parable: "The kingdom of God in the soul and in the world, a life and a growth not dependent on human power, gradual,

progressive and complete in its development."--Dr. George Clark's *Notes*, published by the American Baptist Publication Society.

A Suggested Interpretation.

Analogous to the three noted stages in the growth of a seed of corn—viz.: **1.** From the appearance of the blade to that of the stalk. **2.** From the stalk to the appearance of the ear. **3.** From the earing to the full corn in the ear—its complete and ripened development—is the growth of the kingdom of heaven.

These stages of growth would be the three marked periods in the growth of His kingdom on earth

I. Its inceptive or organizing period.

II. Its development.

III. Its full and glorious consummation.

1. The Inceptive Period includes the time from the planting of the first church (the setting up of the kingdom) until the ascension of Christ and the descent of the Holy Spirit, i.e., the period of the personal administration of it by Christ himself.

As in the case of the blade stage of the corn, the casual and unintelligent observer could not discern the real character of the plant, or distinguish it from the common grass of the field, and certainly not discover anything that bore the appearance of an ear of corn, so many casual readers and partisan interpreters profess to see nothing in the history of Christianity from the days of John the Baptist until Pentecost that indicates the existence of the kingdom of Christ; but, nevertheless, it was as certainly there, in its elementary form, as the undeveloped ear is in the corn blade. Christ himself expressly and repeatedly asserted its actual existence:

"THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS WERE UNTIL JOHN, SINCE WHICH TIME THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS PREACHED, AND ALL MEN [NOT PRESS INTO BUT] ASSAIL IT."—LUKE 16:16.

This agrees with Matt. 11:12.

"AND WHEN HE WAS DEMANDED OF THE PHARISEES WHEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHOULD COME HE ANSWERED THEM AND SAID, THE KINGDOM OF GOD COMETH NOT WITH OBSERVATION ; NEITHER SHALL THEY SAY, LO HERE OR THERE, FOR LO, THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS IN THE MIDST OF YOU." —LUKE 17:20-21. (SEE AMERICAN REVISION.)

That is, it was there present among them.

"BUT IF I CAST OUT DEVILS BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD, THEN IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD COME UNTO YOU."—MATT. 12:28.

It was an actual existence. Publicans and harlots entered into it by baptism. The scribes and Pharisees assailed it. Christ informed Nicodemus that except a man were born of the spirit he could not see it, and, unless born of water (baptized) in addition to the spiritual birth, he could not enter it, which implies its existence.

During this, the Organizing Period, the kingdom was under the direct personal administration of its King and Founder. He was building, setting up and establishing it. Its laws were both enacted and executed by Him in person. This period was

represented by the cutting of the stone out of the mountain without hands—*i.e.,* human or angelic agency.

2. The Second Period in the progress of Christ's kingdom embraces all the time from His ascension until His return—the Regeneration. (Matt. 19:28.) This period is analogous to the earing time of the corn blade or stalk, and, in Daniel's prophecy, is the time between the cutting out of the stone from the mountain and its smiting the great image. (Dan. 2:44.)

During the blade, or stalk, period of the corn, as I have said, there was nothing, to the inexperienced eye, that looked like an ear of corn; yet, during this period, after the form of an ear and the green, imperfect and scattered grains of corn appeared, no one questioned that it was indeed corn; so, in this age, few can be found to deny that the kingdom, **in one of its phases,** is in existence. The kernels of corn are fast multiplying in the ear; and the signs of its fullness and maturity are manifold and evident to every Scripturally intelligent observer.

3. The Third Period in the progressive growth of the kingdom, represented by the first appearance of the green ear on the stalk, and the scattering kernels of unripe corn upon it, to the **FULL CORN IN THE EAR,** represents all the time in the history of the kingdom from the return of Christ—when commences the Regeneration—until the close of the Millennial Age.

(1. At the commencement of this Third Period Christ will return with all His now glorified saints, gathered from their graves and caught up and out of the living populations of earth.

(2. Then will take place, in their presence, the judgment of **nations,** as **nations,** and the avenging of their blood upon those that dwell upon the earth - those "goat nations" that oppressed and persecuted them.

(3. Then Antichrist himself will be destroyed, and all Antichristian organizations, civil and religious (and at this time the whole world, with its kings and rulers, will be under his control, and in open rebellion to Christ), will be crushed into dust by Christ as King of His saints, as the symbolic stone cut out of the mountain, and their very dust driven from the earth like the chaff by the wind of a summer's threshing floor.

Thus and **then** will the prophecies of Daniel 2:44, and David (Ps. 2.), and John (Rev. 20.), be fulfilled when the stone-kingdom will smite the image and break it in pieces. But this is not all of it. It was to become a great mountain and fill the whole earth.

Then will Christ, as the antitype of David, by His almighty power, subdue all His enemies, overcome and bind and cast out Satan, the strong man armed; will spoil his goods (Luke 11:21-23) and take possession of all the kingdoms of this earth.

"The Regeneration" will be the constituting of all these kingdoms into His one now universal kingdom, over which, with His saints as joint heirs, He will reign on this earth for one thousand years in undisputed sway, as King of kings and Lord of lords, "and all men shall see and **fear** His glory from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof."

This Millennial Period, during which the ***"full corn in the ear"*** will appear in its ripened state—its full glory—I call

The Consummation of the Kingdom.

I refer to the following Scriptures in support of these positions, which I trust the reader will carefully read: Dan. 2:34-45; 7:26-28; Luke 22:29-31; Matt. 19:28; Acts 3:20-22; Rev. 19:11; 20:1-7, 10; 2Tim. 2:12.

Note.-- See ***"Seven Dispensations"***, Part III., for a full development of Christ's work, and the *"Doctrine of the Last Things."*

THE MILLENNIAL ISSUE: *by G. E. Jones.*

Excerpt from ***Part Two***: ...***Objections...*** of Albert J. Kempin, *"Gospel Trumpet Company"* of Anderson, Indiana, ***...Answered***. Mr. Kempin's book, ***Why the Millennial Doctrine Is Not Biblical***, was sold by the *"Bible Truth Depot"* in Swengel, Pa.[Lately published by *"Reformation Publishers"* Prestonsburg, KY and available in Kindle from Amazon (September 5, 2012)]. Also from ***Part Four: Conclusion***.

"It Robs Jesus of His Throne and Crown."

This is the first objection Mr. Kempin offers to try to show why the millennial doctrine is not Biblical. I shall turn that charge around and place it on him. He and all his kind are the ones who would take from Jesus His throne and His crown. The Premillennialists are the only ones who believe and teach that Jesus will receive the throne and the crown promised Him.

Under his first reason, or objection, Mr. Kempin says, *"Jesus has a kingdom now."* Premillennialists do not deny this. But Mr. Kempin does not seem to know that Jesus teaches that **there are three phases to the kingdom** of God. In Mark 4:26-28 Jesus likens the kingdom of God to the seed of corn that is planted in the earth. He says, in this connection, "**The earth bringeth forth fruit of herself: first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.**" Here we find three stages or phases of the kingdom. We have: (1) **The blade.** (2) **The ear.** (3) **The full corn in the ear.**

Mr. Kempin would only have one stage or phase. He would cut it short in the blade stage. He sure would make a fine farmer. He would cut his corn down when the blade first shows through the ground. But at that he would be as good a farmer as he is a Bible teacher. We admit that **the first phase started when Christ was here the first time.** But there are other phases, and the thousand years reign is another one of those phases.

In his effort to upset the millennial doctrine, Mr. Kempin contradicted himself. On page 5 he quoted part of Isaiah 9:6-7 to prove that Christ had a kingdom in His first advent into the world. I shall quote what he quoted, and after that what he left off *"Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder....Of the increase of his government there shall be no end."* But he failed to quote the next expression in Isaiah, which reads: ***"Upon the throne of DAVID."*** That part of the quotation did not fit his doctrine, so he had to leave it out. After quoting the words above he said, *"This reign is immediately associated with Christ's birth—a Son is given. Our Lord claimed a kingdom in His first advent into the world."* Then he quoted John 18:36 and Matt. 24:14 to substantiate his position that Christ had His kingdom during His first advent. But hear him on the very next page. There he asks the question, *"When did Christ receive this kingdom?"* Then he quotes Dan. 7:13. After quoting this verse, he says, *"Daniel saw Jesus ascending to God after having suffered, bled and died, to begin His great mediatorial reign."* Page 6. So on

page 5 Mr. Kempin said, Christ had His kingdom while He was on earth during His first advent. But on the very next page He does not receive it until after He has left the earth and gone back to heaven. Mr. Kempin had better learn to keep straight with himself before launching out to straighten out the Premillennialists. Which time was Mr. Kempin right? Was he right on page 5 when he said Christ claimed a kingdom in His first advent, or was he right when he taught that Christ did not receive that kingdom before going back to heaven?

After quoting Matt. 24:14, Mr. Kempin said, *"Millennial teachers would have the end come and then the establishment of the kingdom of Christ, but Jesus said the kingdom would be shared through the preaching of the gospel and then the end would come,"* page 5. Now, just where did Jesus say anything about the kingdom being shared through the preaching of the gospel? I fail to read such an expression in Matt. 24:14. That verse says, ***"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."*** This verse states that the gospel of the kingdom shall be **preached for a witness unto all nations**; and then the end should come. But it says nothing about **sharing in a reign or kingdom** during this time. The end of what shall come? I guess Mr. Kempin thinks this means the end of the earth. But it does not say so. In that chapter the apostles had asked Jesus about the end of the world (Gr. age). It matters little with me whether he takes the King James translation which renders this "world," or others which render it "age." The world is not the earth. The world is simply this present order of things which exists upon this earth. The Devil is said to be the god of this age or world, 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Ephesians 2:2; 6:11-12. ***"The whole world lieth in the wicked one,"*** 1 John 5:19, R.V. When this age ends this present world will end, but then Christ shall establish a new order of things and reign a thousand years on this earth. Millennial haters have never learned to discriminate between different terms. Because they have confused the words world and earth they think the end of the world means the end of the earth.

In the same connection Mr. Kempin used John 18:36, where Jesus said, ***"My kingdom is not of this world."*** Of course, it is not. If so He would have received His authority from the Devil and would be working in connection with the Devil, who is the god of this world. But Jesus nowhere said His kingdom or reign would not be on this earth. When Jesus returns to the earth to reign He will set aside this present world order, and establish a new order on the earth. "A King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth," Jer. 23:5. "Thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon the earth," Psalm 67:4.

On page 5, Mr. Kempin quoted Heb. 1:8 and Heb. 4:16 to try to show that Jesus is now upon His throne. Heb. 1:8 is a quotation from the 45th Psalm. Had Mr. Kempin read the connection closely he would have seen that the application is not to this present time, but to the second advent of Christ back to the earth. Let us read it:

> *"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness;—thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne O God is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre,"* Psalm 45:3-6.

By comparing this passage with Rev. 19:11-21 where Christ is pictured coming on a white horse in righteousness and make war, we see they are the same. At that time He will destroy the armies and the kings of the earth, so this passage applies to His second coming to the earth.

In Heb. 4:16 the believer is admonished to come boldly to a throne of grace. That throne of grace is the throne of the Heavenly Father in heaven, not David's throne which was promised to Christ.

Then Mr. Kempin says, *"Our Lord wears the crown of His sovereignty now. Jesus is not an uncrowned King. He wears His glorious crown now."* To prove this statement he quotes Heb. 2:9, or part of it. *"We see Jesus—crowned with glory and honour."* He failed to finish the quotation, ***"that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."*** Mr. Kempin does not seem to know that there are two kinds of crowns mentioned in the New Testament. One is a crown denoting victory in a contest. That kind of crown Paul had under consideration when he was talking about runners running in a race. *"They do it to obtain a corruptible crown,"* 1 Cor. 9:24-25. No runner wins a crown of sovereignty by winning a race. He wins a crown of victory. The word in Greek for this crown is *"Stephanos."* The verb form of this word is *"Stephano,"* which means to crown the victor in a contest. This is the word used in Heb. 2:9 to which Mr. Kempin referred. As a victor over temptation, death and the grave, Jesus is crowned as victor. But the crown of sovereignty is denoted by another word. This word is *"Diadema,"* meaning diadem, or crown. On page 136 of his Lexicon, Mr. Thayer says, *"Stephanos"* is the crown of victory and that *"Diadema"* is the crown as badge of royalty. We nowhere find Jesus wearing the *"Diadema,"* crown of royalty, until John gives us a picture of Him at His second coming in Rev. 19:11-21. Here we read that *"On his head were many crowns" (Diadema),* Rev. 19:12. Mr. Kempin would have done well to have looked up on this instead of jumping to a conclusion on the matter.

Mr. Kempin denies that Jesus is going to reign from Jerusalem on earth, so he is the one who is robbing Jesus of His throne and His crown, for Jesus was promised the throne of His father David, and that throne was in Jerusalem. But this comes up more fully in his second objection.

"The Millennial Doctrine Ignores the Kingdom of God as a Present Reality."

I have already shown that there are three stages to the kingdom, the **blade**, the **ear**, and the **full corn in the ear**, Mark 4:26-28. We do recognize the present, or blade stage, but we do not ignore the millennial stage as he does. **The kingdom exists today in the person of the King, Christ, and the ruling class He is now calling out.** But that over which we are to reign is yet future, for flesh and blood doth not inherit the kingdom of God. We must first be resurrected. This is just more proof that the first resurrection in Rev. 20:5-6 is the resurrection of the bodies of the saints.

Under this objection, Mr. Kempin says, *"If we are to reign with Christ we ought to do it now."* P. 34. This doctrine came from the Roman Catholic Church. On page 4487 of The World Book Encyclopedia I read the following: *"Saint Augustine, the*

great Catholic theologian of the 5th century, was the first to teach the present belief of the Roman Catholic Church, that the church is the kingdom of Christ, and that the millennium began with His first advent."

Here is the source of Mr. Kempin's false doctrine and his opposition to what the Premillennialists teach. He is holding on to the false teaching of the harlot. The Bible puts our ***reign*** in the future. ***"If we suffer, we shall*** (future) ***also reign with him,"*** 2 Tim. 2:12. The false doctrine that we are now reigning came through Roman Catholicism. The first one to teach it was Augustine, a Catholic theologian. We shall have more of this anon. A lot of people have more Romanism hanging on to them than they think. Even some Baptists have been infected with the leaven of this scarlet woman.

Conclusion.

There are three phases of the kingdom to be reckoned with, Mark 4:26-29.

The millennial reign is only one of these phases.

There were mysteries about the kingdom that were not made known to the old prophets, Matt. 13:35.

One of these mysteries was that the kingdom was to have three phases, Mark 4:26-29.

They only saw the kingdom enduring without an end, Isa. 9:7.

They foresaw the events of the millennial age, but did not see that phase as separate from the eternal phase.

It remained for the New Testament to make known the three phases, Mark 4:26-29, and to give us the length of the phase of that kingdom on this present earth, 2 Peter 3:7-8, and Rev. 20:4-6.

"THE KINGDOM POSTPONED?" *by Elder C. A. Smith.*

Excerpt from ***"Rice–Smith Discussion"*** 1936.

In *"Sword of the Lord"* issue of June 12, 1936, Brother Rice says, "Jesus meant that the promised heavenly kingdom on earth foretold by Daniel and other prophets was now offered to the children of Israel. Christ their king was at hand. But they rejected Christ and his kingdom. The nation would not repent. The leaders soon set about to crucify Jesus and THE KINGDOM WAS POSTPONED."

Where does the Bible say that *"the kingdom was postponed"?* This position teaches that JESUS CHRIST WAS NOT GOD—*that he came to do something he was not ABLE to accomplish!* IF JESUS CHRIST WAS DEITY, THEN HE KNEW ALL THINGS, AND WOULD NOT HAVE UNDERTAKEN SOMETHING THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO BACK OFF FROM, AND POSTPONE. The trouble with you, Brother Rice, is that you cannot see **the "THREE DOMINIONS" of the ONE kingdom**—(1) ***"first the blade"—***(2) ***"then the* ear"—**and (3) ***"after that the full corn in the ear"*** (Mark 4:28).

The kingdom has a ***"trinity"*** of fulfillment. Our Lord's personal ministry as the first stage, part or ***"dominion"***, and the second is under the direction of the Holy Spirit in the absence of the king; and the third begins upon our Lord's return, the perfecting, or "harvest" time—***"but when the fruit is brought forth, immediately He putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come"*** (Mark 4:29).

The coming of Christ, back to earth to reign *as* ***"King of kings, and Lord of lords"****,* is also called His kingdom, the coming of His kingdom—***"So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand"*** (Luke 21:31). But if this means that the kingdom was ***"postponed"****,* how do you know, Brother Rice, THAT CHRIST WILL NOT AGAIN POSTPONE HIS KINGDOM? If he was so imperfect upon his first coming, to POSTPONE what he came to do; WE ONLY HAVE A PRETENDED "CHRIST" WHO MAY ALSO "FACE ABOUT" UPON HIS SECOND COMING, AND LEAVE THE WORLD WITHOUT A KINGDOM! If not, why not, Brother Rice? ***This needs some fixing!***

Christ said through Malachi: *"BEHOLD, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me."* (Mal. 3:1). Mark records: *"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as* it is *written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before* thy *face. which shall prepare thy way before thee"* (Mark 1:1-2). But according to Brother Rice, after John the Baptist preached, *"Saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matt. 3:2), and after, *"From that time Jesus began to* preach, *and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matt. 4:17), and after Jesus had ordained and commissioned the apostles, saying, *"As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matt. 10:7)—AFTER ALL OF THIS, ACCORDING TO RICE'S "MIRACLE THEOLOGY", JESUS CHRIST, THE PERFECT ONE, HAD TO "TAKE BACK-WATER" AND POSTPONE HIS KINGDOM!

But of John the Baptist, it is recorded, *"There was a man sent* from God, *whose name was John"* (John 1:6). Again John the Baptist said, *"And I* know *Him* (Christ) *not*; *but He* (God) *that sent me to baptize with water, the same* (God) *said unto me, Upon whom thou* (John) *shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He* (Christ) *who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost"* (John 1:33). So God the Father sent John the Baptist, and *"said unto him"* the things God wanted John to preach; and John preached, *"The kingdom of heaven is at hand"*. SO GOD OUR ALL-WISE, AND ALL-MIGHTY, HEAVENLY FATHER ("The silly dunce!") ALSO HAD TO BACK UP, CHANGE HIS PLANS, AND HAVE HIS KINGDOM POSTPONED, *according to "John R. Rice Theology"!*

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

From Dr. Fred G. Stevenson's ***Direct Answers to Difficult Questions.***

"Are the church and the bride the same? Are the bride and the new Jerusalem the same? Is the new Jerusalem the city for which Abraham looked? Will Abraham and the other patriarchs be in the new Jerusalem?"

As we consider the subject of the church, the bride of Christ, and the new Jerusalem, it will be necessary for clearness to mention some prevalent ideas on it. The most common idea is that all the saved, or even all the religious people, constitute the real, the universal, the spiritual church. This idea is foreign to the Scriptures, and it was concocted by Protestant scholars to cover up the embarrassment of their modern origin as religious denominations. All of them lack fifteen hundred years being old enough to be the church that Jesus founded in person while He was in the world. Jesus says to the true church at Matthew 28:20, ". . . Behold, I am with you all the days until the

completion of the age." Jesus could not be with them "all the days" if they did not come into existence until fifteen hundred years after he had begun His church.

There are certain qualifications which a member of a true church must meet:

(1) He must be saved by repentance and faith. John came to prepare the people of whom Jesus formed the church, and Matthew 3:2 tells us the burden of His message was that the people should repent. At Acts 16:31, Paul and Silas told the Philippian jailer that he should believe on Jesus Christ and he would be saved. Joining the church does not save anyone, but it puts saved people in the only place where they may serve the Lord in a fully acceptable manner. One can get his name on a church roll without being saved, but he cannot be a real church member without having been born again.

(2) In order to enter into the spirit of church membership, one must solemnly commit himself to walk by the letter and the spirit of the New Testament scriptures. In the third chapter of Luke, John impressed upon the people that there were some things to be forsaken and some things to be embraced when one commits himself to church membership. The testimony of a changed life is the most effective testimony that a church member may bear before the world.

(3) To be a real church member, one must have submitted himself to scriptural baptism. This is immersion in water of a saved person who by his baptism is committing himself to a new life. Before the Israelites were typically baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (I Corinthians 10:1-4), they might have very readily returned to Egypt with its bondage; but afterward, it would be virtually impossible for them to return to the same status they had before their leaving Egypt. They must either go on with Moses to the promised land, or they must die in futility in the wilderness. This is not an implication that they might have fallen out of salvation, but it is a fearful warning that saved people may live their lives in vain so far as being a right testimony is concerned.

Commitment of oneself to church membership is such a serious thing that apparently one does not do it but once in his lifetime. When one walks in a way that is unworthy of church membership, the church withdraws church fellowship from him; see I Corinthians 5:4-5. Apparently, this same man was restored to church fellowship without being rebaptized (II Corinthians 2:6-8). This is in full harmony with the common practice of Baptist churches. We exclude them from fellowship when they sin, and we restore them to fellowship when they repent. Only when one testifies he was not saved when he was baptized is he rebaptized, considering his first baptism to be invalid.

Those who constitute the bride of Christ are likewise church members who meet certain qualifications. As a general statement, we may say the members of the bride are church members who live up to the commitment they make entering into the church. It is suggested that when one meets all the qualifications for church membership, he is at that time accounted as a member of the bride of Christ. If he should die at that moment, he would have a position in the bride. But for people who live over a period of time after they enter into the bridal relationship, continued faithfulness is required. A position in the bride is evidently what is promised to those who continue with Jesus in temptations; see Luke 22:28-30. John 6:64 refers to Judas, who betrayed Jesus. He had never been saved;

therefore, he had never been a real disciple — only an outward conformer. But those who turned back at John 6:66 may very well have contained some who were saved, but they decided the way was too hard for them to continue in it. They would correspond to the typically saved Israelites who fell in the wilderness. None of them lost salvation, but they lost the blessings they might have had in life and a reward in the life to come. Faithfulness involves such an infinite number of details that only an infinite God is capable of rightly estimating who is worthy and who is unworthy to be accounted a position in the bride. Of course, all of us can see about us those who notoriously despise the opportunities that are theirs. It seems we are justified in reckoning them to be unworthy of the bridal relationship.

As to the new Jerusalem, we may sum it up as follows:

(1) Galatians 4:26 — The heavenly Jerusalem is the present abiding place of God, the holy angels, and the spirits of all the departed saved; see also Revelation 6:9-11.

(2) Hebrews 11:10-16 — The heavenly Jerusalem is the city for which Abraham and other saved people look. It is the place where our spirits go when we die.

(3) Hebrews 12:18-24 — Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the heavenly Jerusalem is the place where our spirits may go in communion, meditation, and worship. This is a special blessedness that church saints have over those who have lived in previous dispensations. Before one denies this, let him explain what Hebrews 11:40 means in the light of its context.

(4) Hebrews 13:14 — The continuing city which we seek is the same one for which Abraham looked.

(5) In the last two chapters of Revelation, the heavenly Jerusalem comes down to abide on an earth which has been completely renovated with every trace of sin removed. This is the eternal home of all the saved.

In summary,

the church, institutionally speaking, is made up of all the legitimate members of all scriptural churches. Scriptural churches are only those which have the Scriptures as the basis of their doctrines and practices. Some of the members are faithful in service and some are not.

The bride of which John spoke at John 3:29 is that group of church members who follow Jesus in all His doctrines and practices. They were found literally following Jesus when He was in the world; since He left the world, they are found following His teachings and practices. The marriage of the Lamb takes place in Heaven immediately after the judgment of the saved. It amounts to the faithful of the church age being joined to Christ in a special relationship for the Millennial reign (Matthew 19:28).

In the Millennium, all the saved are fully and finally prepared for the Heaven ages. All are forever in complete harmony with God. If we have led souls to the truth in the present world, nothing will ever change that fact; if we have not stood faithfully for the truth in the present life, nothing will ever change that fact either. So, we see that in one sense there will be equality in Heaven; in another sense there never will be equality.

The heavenly Jerusalem is now the home of God, the holy angels, and the spirits of all the dead saved. It will come down to the recreated earth at the end of the Millennium and the beginning of the eternal ages of the future. It will be the eternal home of all the

saved, but the two covenant peoples, Israel and the church, will retain their identity as such forever (Revelation 21:10-14).

The works of God among mankind have always been two-fold: First, to get all the people possible saved; second, to call out and maintain a people who will continue to bear faithful testimony to the truth of God. The two peoples with and through whom God has worked especially are, of course, Israel and the church.

The 3 Stages of Anti-Christ's Kingdom

Excerpt from: ***God's War on Terror: ISLAM, PROPHECY AND THE BIBLE. A fresh understanding of Biblical prophecy from an Eastern perspective as viewed by an ex-Muslim terrorist;*** SECTION II – ***The Madhi vs. Antichrist – Why Are They So Similar***, Chapter 30 – ***Both Deceive and Destroy by Peace;*** and (APPENDIX A) ***My Testimony: THE CONFESSIONS OF A PALESTINIAN TERRORIST*** By Walid Shoebat.

What the West does not understand about Islamism is that Jihad is very systematic. It has stages. If Muslims have the upper hand, then Jihad is waged by force. If Muslims do not have the upper hand, then Jihad is waged through financial and political means. Since Muslims do not have the upper hand in America or Europe, they talk about peace in front of you while supporting Hamas and Hezbollah in the back room. The whole idea of Islam being a peaceful religion emanates from that silent stage of Jihad. Sheikh Qaradawi has taught Muslims this form of trickery at conferences in the U.S. I have it on video. At one conference, Qaradawi used the example of Salahu-Deen Al-Ayubi (Saladin). Saladin was asked to concede to peace with the verse from the Qur'an 8:61, "And if they incline to peace, then incline to it and trust in Allah." However, from Qur'an 47:35, he replied, "And be not slack so as to cry for peace and you have the upper hand."§§§§§§§

In Islam, conceding to peace means that the Islamic Umma (nation) is weak. But as soon as Islam becomes the stronger force, it switches into war mode and high-gear....

I believed that working as an activist for the Muslim Brotherhood was the best way to help bring about a much-needed unity among Muslims; not Palestinian Muslims or Jordanian Muslims, but rather one Muslim Ummah—one universal Islamic community, under the one umbrella of Islam. To this end, a Jordanian Sheikh named Jamal Said came to the United States to recruit students. The recruitment meetings were held in basements or rented hotel rooms. Muslim students flocked from all over the U.S. to attend the meetings and listen to Sheikh Jamal Said. Jamal had an almost legendary status and reputation. He was an associate of Abdullah Azzam, who is famous throughout the Middle East for being the mentor of none other than Osama Bin Laden. People often ask me if I think that there are terrorist cells operating within the United States. There can be no question that there are. While so many of America's college students in the seventies were experimenting with drugs, protesting their government, and participating in the birthing of the "flower child" movement, they were oblivious to the other underground revolution that was being birthed by radical Muslim students across the country. Within Islam, it is taught that when the Muslims enter a country to conquer it for Allah, there are various stages to that "invasion". Those were the early stages of the most subversive movement that this country will ever know. It was the birthing of the Jihadist movement in America.

§§§§§§§ From Video, Sheikh Qaradawi, speaking at the I.A.P, (Islamic Association of Palestine) conference, Kansas City

The Three Stages of Jihad.

Excerpt from: ***ANSWERING MUSLIMS*********-The Islamoblog of Acts 17 Apologetics.***

When we turn to Islam's theological sources and historical writings (Qur'an, Hadith, Sira, and Tafsir), we find that there are three stages in the call to Jihad, depending on the status of Muslims in a society.

STAGE ONE: Stealth Jihad—When Muslims are completely outnumbered and can't possibly win a physical confrontation with unbelievers, they are to live in peace with non-Muslims and preach a message of tolerance. We see an example of this stage when Muhammad and his followers were a persecuted minority in Mecca. Since the Muslims were entirely outnumbered, the revelations Muhammad received during this stage (e.g., "You shall have your religion and I shall have my religion") called for religious tolerance and proclaimed a future punishment (rather than a worldly punishment) for unbelievers.

STAGE TWO: Defensive Jihad—When there are enough Muslims and resources to defend the Islamic community, Muslims are called to engage in defensive Jihad. Thus, when Muhammad had formed alliances with various groups outside Mecca and the Muslim community had become large enough to begin fighting, Muhammad received Qur'an 22:39-40:

> *"Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and most surely Allah is well able to assist them; Those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say: our Lord is Allah."*

Although Muslims in the West often pretend that Islam only allows defensive fighting, later revelations show otherwise.

STAGE THREE: Offensive Jihad—When Muslims establish a majority and achieve political power in an area, they are commanded to engage in offensive Jihad. Hence, once Mecca and Arabia were under Muhammad's control, he received the call the fight all unbelievers. In Surah 9:29, we read:

> *"Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger, nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth, from among the People of the Book, until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued."*

Notice that this verse doesn't order Muslims to fight oppressors, but to fight those who don't believe in Islam (including the "People of the Book"—Jews and Christians).

Not surprisingly, we find similar commands in Islam's most trusted collections of ahadith (traditions containing Muhammad's teachings).

> ***Sahih al-Bukhari 6924***—*Muhammad said: "I have been ordered to fight the people till they say: La ilaha illallah (none has the right to be worshipped but Allah), and whoever said La ilaha illahllah, Allah will save his property and his life from me."*
>
> ***Sahih Muslim 30***—*Muhammad said: "I have been commanded to fight against people so long as they do not declare that there is no god but Allah."*

Here again, the criterion for fighting people is that the people believe something other than Islam.

It's clear, then, that when Muslims rose to power, peaceful verses of the Qur'an were abrogated by verses commanding Muslims to fight people based on their beliefs. Islam's greatest scholars acknowledge this. For instance, Ibn Kathir (Islam's greatest commentator on the Qur'an) sums up Stage Three as follows:

********* Answering Muslims is a Christian apologetics website dedicated to responding to the questions, objections, and arguments of Muslims. The site is run by Christian debaters, lecturers, and writers who have a special interest in Islam.

"Therefore all people of the world should be called to Islam. If anyone of them refuses to do so, or refuses to pay the Jizyah, they should be fought till they are killed."

Take the GOSPEL of the Kingdom to the JEWS

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion,

Thy GoD Reigneth!

Isaiah 52:7

"This Scripture verse has often been quoted when messengers of the gospel were sent into foreign countries. But who ever considered that it speaks before everything else of the glorious ministry of those who bring peace and salvation to the Jewish people? The apostle Paul used this verse in its correct application. Referring to the Jews he asks:

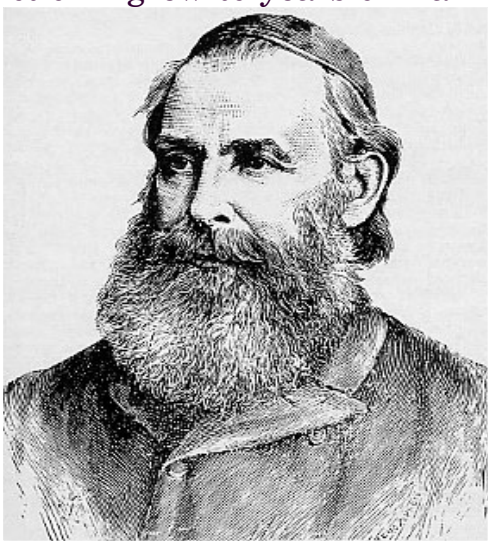
"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" *(Romans 10:14-15).*

Unfortunately, for centuries the Jewish people have been neglected by most ministers of the gospel. Scattered among the nations they experienced indescribable trouble and suffering. This was the result of unbelief and disobedience to God, as it is written:

*"**And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee....And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, [even] wood and stone....And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind:**"- Deuteronomy 28:37, 64-65.*

Many Jews had early in life bitter experiences of persecution. Rabbi Isaac Lichtenstein† wrote in "Der Judenspiegel" (The Jewish Mirror):

"***Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say:*** *Psalm 129:1.* Mockery, scorn, blows, and all manner of humiliation, have been our portion even at the hands of Christian children. I still remember the stones which were thrown at us as we left the synagogue, and how, when bathing in the river, and powerless to prevent it, we saw them cast our clothes, with laughter and insult, into the water ... It is no wonder that I came to think that Christ Himself was the plague and curse of the Jews - the origin and promoter of our sorrows and persecutions. In this conviction I grew to years of manhood, and still thinking so I became old. I knew no difference between true and merely nominal Christianity".



† [LICHTENSTEIN, Isaac, Rabbi (1824-1909).
A Hungarian Rabbi, he preached Messiah Yeshua to his Jewish Hungarian congregation in Tapio-Szele who refused to dismiss him in spite of persecution for years, saying "I shall most willingly retract if you can convince me that I am wrong." Later witnessed in many parts of the European for twenty years about the truth of Yeshua til his death. He died on Oct. 16, 1909, leaving writings explaining how he read a

copy of the New Testament after 40 years of work as a rabbi in Hungary and was impressed by "the greatness, power, and glory of this book, formerly a sealed book to me. All seemed so new to me and yet it did me good like the sight of an old friend.... I had thought the New Testament to be impure, a source of pride, of selfishness, of hatred, and of the worst kind of violence, but as I opened it I felt myself peculiarly and wonderfully taken possession of. A sudden glory, a light flashed through my soul. I looked for thorns and found roses; I discovered pearls instead of pebbles; instead of hatred, love; instead of vengeance, forgiveness; instead of bondage, freedom." A letter to his son, a doctor, reports that "From every line in the New Testament, from every word, the Jewish spirit streamed forth light, life, power, endurance, faith, hope, love, charity, limitless and indestructible faith in God." Others, hating the idea of a long-term rabbi turning "renegade," attack Lichtenstein. His reply: "I have been an honored rabbi for the space of 40 years, and now, in my old age, I am treated by my friends as one possessed by an evil spirit, and by my enemies as an outcast. I am become a butt of mockers, who point the finger at me. But while I live I will stand on my watchtower, though I may stand there all alone. I will listen to the words of God." [Source. More on him at Messianic Art Profiles in Faith. - esn]

How tragic that throughout these years Rabbi Lichtenstein had not heard the gospel of peace. Even believers showed little sympathy and understanding. Where was the Christian witness? where the messengers of salvation? Why did they not obey God's injunction: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people! Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem!" (Isaiah 40:1-2)?

Some Christians think: "God has cast away His people!" But the apostle Paul objects: "God forbid. For I also am an Israelite... God hath not cast away his people.." (Romans 11:1-2). On the contrary: Not God but the Christians have cast them away! Some argue: "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them"- (Luke 16:29). But how can they know that Messianic prophecy has been fulfilled, if they never see it in the New Testament? - others say: "Leave them alone! They are God's people and now back in the land!" Yet, according to the Bible it is not enough to be in the land. They must return to God. If they want to be called God's people, they have to come into a personal relationship with Him! Peter, the apostle to the circumcision, writes to Jewish believers in the Lord Jesus: "In time past ye were not a people, but now ye are the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. For ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (I Peter 2:10,25; cf. Hosea 1:6-10; 2:23; Isaiah 53:6). Jesus said to the unbelieving Jews: "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:26-27).

Every Christian knows that the great commission of our Lord to make disciples of all nations begins with the Jewish people (Luke 24:47). He said: "Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

How can we fulfill our Lord's command to bring salvation to the Jewish people? To answer this question let us consider four guiding principles from the letter to the Romans.

1. LOVE THE JEWISH PEOPLE

If we want to help people we must first of all love them and be concerned about their salvation. Maybe you find it difficult to love a person because of one reason or another. Then remember: God hates and abhors sin, but He loves the sinner. You must also distinguish between the person and his attitude, not condoning the evil, though loving

the person. God desires that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4).

The apostle Paul had a great love for his own people. He writes:

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites..." Romans 9:1-4

Paul wished to be cut off and banished from Christ for the sake and instead of his fellow-countrymen. How did he come to such a love? He was set aflame by Calvary: God's love was shed abroad in his heart because Messiah died for sinners (Romans 5:5-8). The love of Christ constrained him (2 Cor. 5:14).

We see this love for Israel also in the Old Testament: MOSES, the servant of God, was willing to sacrifice himself for his people so that they might be saved. He pleaded with God: "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them Gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin-; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Exodus 32:31-32). DAVID, the man after God's own heart, said a similar prayer: "Let thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued" (I Chronicles 21:17).

If Paul, Moses and David loved the Jews, how much more does JESUS love them. The prophet Isaiah speaks of this love, saying: "He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people (the Jews) was he stricken" (Isaiah 53:8). When Jesus saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were harassed, and scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd (Matthew 9:36). He said: "I lay down my life for the sheep (the Jews). And other sheep I have (the gentiles), which are not of this fold: them also I must bring" (John 10:15-16).

Do you love the Jews? God loves them with an everlasting love! (Deuteronomy 7:7-8; Jeremiah 31:3). Should we not also love them? It is amazing how many Christians will tolerate the Jews but do not really love them.

A certain Christian who did not love the Jews once dreamed that he had died and was carried into heaven. It was glorious beyond expression. Angels led him into a wonderful mansion prepared for him. But after some days he felt uncomfortable for he asked himself: "Where is Joseph whose story in the Bible I liked so much? Where is David the sweet psalmist of Israel? Where is my beloved apostle Paul? And above all, where is our blessed Lord and Saviour?" He asked one of the angels for an explanation. And the angel said: "O my dear, we thought you did not like the Jews. Therefore we placed you in a part of heaven, where you would never see them."-This gave him such a shock that he woke up. Suddenly he realized that these men and most writers of the Bible and the Lord Jesus Himself were Jews. He was pleased that he could still change his attitude toward the Jewish people.

Yes, when we think of the Jewish writers of the Bible and the blessings which they brought to us (2 Peter 1:21; Jeremiah 15:16; Psalm 119:72, 97, 127); when we consider that salvation was given to us through the blood of the King of the Jews (John 4:22; 19:19); when we realize that we gentiles became partakers of the wonderful blessings in the New Covenant which God had made with Israel (Jeremiah 31:31; Romans 9:4; 11:17-20; 15:27; Ephesians 2:11-13; 3:6), then we shall show true gratitude to the Jewish people: We will love them as Paul did.

2. PRAY FOR THEIR SALVATION

Paul loved his kinsmen not only in words. He was concerned about their eternal well-being. Therefore he gave himself to fervent intercession. He says: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved." Romans 10:1.

He knew that the majority of his people were lost and in need of salvation (Isaiah 53:6; Matthew 7:13-14). "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." (Ecclesiastes 7:20). "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Nobody can save himself by his own efforts and good works. How often have Jews (and also gentiles) tried to outweigh their sins with deeds of kindness, being zealous to establish their own righteousness before God and not willing to submit themselves to God's righteousness? (Romans 10:3). However, we receive forgiveness and justification as a gift from God, and that only through Messiah Jesus (Isaiah 45:25; 53:11). He is our salvation and righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6; Isaiah 49:6). "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13; cf. Joel 2:32).

Christians are known as those who call on the name of the Lord (I Corinthians 1:2; Acts 9:14, 21).* Paul speaks from personal experience. But how did this violent opponent become ready to call upon the name of Jesus? He had thought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus (Acts 26:9) This furious persecutor of the Church could never have changed except the believers had loved him and pleaded for his forgiveness.

** ["It is as binding on the Church now to preach the Gospel to the Jew for the conversion of **"the remnant according to the election of grace,"** (Romans 11:5) as it is binding on the Church now to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles **"to take out of them a people for His name."**-(Acts 15:14) An election of individuals now—Jews and Gentiles—to form a new body—the Bride of Christ; then the blessing of the nations in millennial times, after the return of the Lord."-- from "ISRAEL MY GLORY" Israel's Mission, and Missions to Israel by John Wilkinson The Founder and Director of the Mildmay Mission to the Jews.---esn]*

Fervent prayer is needed! Many Jews are still opposed to the gospel as Paul was in his ignorance and unbelief (1 Timothy 1:13).The apostle says: ***"As concerning the gospel, [they are] enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, [they are] beloved for the fathers' sakes."*** (Romans 11:28). What an astonishing statement: Enemies of God and at the same time beloved of God. Yes, God loves His enemies! He loved us while we were yet enemies (Romans 5:8,10). Do you love those who try your patience and oppose the gospel? Paul experienced most persecutions from his own people and yet he loved them (Acts 9:23-24, 29; 13:45, 50; 14:2, 19; 17:5, 13; 18:12; 20:3, 19; 21:11; 23:12-14). For Jesus says: ***"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you"*** (Matthew 5:44). Jesus practiced what He taught. On the cross, mocked and insulted, He prayed: ***"Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!"*** (Luke 23:34). Paul had seen this Divine love which forgives and prays for the persecutors (Acts 22:20). When Stephen was stoned Paul watched over the clothes of the witnesses. And then he saw the love of this wonderful disciple of Jesus who knelt down, and cried with a loud voice: ***"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!"*** (Acts 7:58-60). Surely Paul could not have been saved if the disciples had not obeyed the Lord's command: "Love your enemies, bless them, pray for them!"

Are you praying for the Jews? Even for those who are not interested in the gospel: your neighbour, the grocer, the chemist and doctor? Would you not share with them the

blessings which are yours in the Messiah? God promised to bless them that bless the descendants of Abraham, the Jews! (Genesis 12:3). Pray for their salvation! ***"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee"*** (Psalm 122:6).

3. TELL THEM OF THE SAVIOUR

Because we received salvation through the Jews and because the first pioneers, who brought the glad tidings to the gentiles, were Hebrew Christians, many of us realize that we are deeply indebted to the Jewish people. While some of us pray daily for them to call on the name of Jesus for their salvation, this is not enough! Paul says:

"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Romans 10:14

We must introduce our blessed Lord and Saviour to them. How? Through the Word of God! Jesus says ***"Search the Scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me!"*** (John 5:39). No one can be born again and receive eternal life without the living and abiding Word of God (1 Peter 1:23-25; John 1:12-14; 1 John 5:11-12).

You may know noble and charitable Jews of whom you think they have no need of being born again. But is it not significant that the Lord Jesus spoke of the necessity of the new birth to a high-ranking theologian, a pious rabbi and member of the ecclesiastical court: ***"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."*** (John 3:7). Did you ever consider that the well-known verse John 3:16, the gospel in a nutshell, was first spoken to this rabbi: ***"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"***? The apostle Peter said to the Jewish leaders: ***"Be it known unto you all, and to all people of Israel ... Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved"*** (Acts 4:10-12). Yes, they must be born again! If any Jew believes in Jesus, he shall not perish but have everlasting life. But Jesus said: ***"If you believe not that I am He (the Messiah and Saviour), ye shall die in your sins"*** (John 8:24).

Therefore the gospel must be preached to them. Scripture says: It should be brought to the Jews first (Romans 1:16): ***"it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek"*** (i.e. the gentile). Did we bring it first to the Jews? We cannot reverse God's sequence: To the Jew first! This is taught in God's Word:

1) God loved them first of all (Exodus 4:22; Deuteronomy 7:7-8).
2) To them He entrusted His oracles (Romans 3:2).
3) His judgments come first upon them (Romans 2:9).
4) First to them His grace is revealed (Romans 2:10).
5) The Saviour was sent first to the Jews (Matthew 15:24).
6) Jesus came to bless them first (Acts 3:26).
7) He sent His disciples first to them (Matthew 10:6).
8) The great commission begins with the Jews (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).
9) The gospel is to the Jews first (Romans 1:16).
10) Paul went always first to the Jews (Acts 26:20; 13:46; 14:1).

Take your Bible and read to them the gospel in the Old Testament: That Messiah is born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14); the Seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15); coming out of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2); the suffering Servant of God (Isaiah 52:13-15; 53:1-12); the crucified One (Psalm 22:14-18). Show them the types which speak of the Messiah: Isaac carrying the wood and being laid on the altar (Genesis 22:6-9); the Paschal lamb dying that the first-born might live (Exodus 12:21-30); the sign of the uplifted serpent which saved everyone that looked up in faith (Numbers 21:6-9). Point out to them how clearly it is fulfilled in the New Testament. Give them the testimony of a Jewish person and tell them how you found the Saviour. And while you give to them the Word pray for them that their blind eyes may be opened to see that God's Word is fulfilled: Salvation has come!

> ***"Arise from the dust! Put on your beautiful garments, my people. Through the Son of Jesse from Bethlehem comes salvation to your soul!"*** *(From the Jewish prayer book: Inauguration of the Shabbat).*

4. SHOW THEM THE LIFE

After having spoken about these three vital steps - to love, to pray and to witness, the apostle stresses the importance of Christian living. Many will agree wholeheartedly and say: "Yes, this is most important! Israel suffered much. We must show them sympathy, kindness and friendliness!" Some have gone so far as over-emphasizing the works of love but leaving out the Christian witness. They put all their efforts into material and physical help and neglect the spiritual blessings, not showing them the way to eternal salvation. This is not sufficient!

When Paul speaks about Christian living he means our life must confirm our words of testimony, the glad tidings of peace, the report about Jesus Who took our sins upon Himself that we might have peace (Romans 10:15-16; cf. Isaiah 40:9; 52:7; 53:1; 61:1). He who found righteousness, justification and new life through faith in the Messiah cannot keep quiet about it. ***"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"*** (Romans 10:10; Psalm 40:9-10; 2 Corinthians 4:13). Through this glorious message comes faith also to those who hear it (Romans 10:17).

But they shall not only hear! Lip-service is not enough! (Isaiah 29:13-14). They must see in us the new life showing that we are redeemed and obey the gospel (Romans 10:16). Otherwise they may say: "What you are, speaks so loud that I do not hear what you are saying!" O, that we would understand what a great responsibility we have toward the Jewish people! Paul asks: ***"...Did not Israel know?..."*** And he refers to the Word of God through Moses: ***"I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people: and by a foolish nation I will anger you."*** Romans 10:19; Deuteronomy. 32:21.

Unfortunately, more have been angered than provoked to jealousy. How angered? Through anti-Semitism, crusades and inquisitions, blood accusations and pogroms, and other persecutions. There are many who lost all relatives through the holocaust in Europe.

Words are not sufficient to convince them. They must see the changed life of those who profess to know the Saviour. ***"The fruit of God's Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"*** (Galatians 5:22). Jesus says: ***"By their fruits ye shall know them!"*** (Matthew 7:16). ***"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"*** (John 13:35). Yes,

a life that shows the fruit of God's Spirit, the character and attitude of Jesus, will make a deep impression on the Jewish people. I know a Jewish doctor who was provoked to jealousy by a nurse who reflected the life of Jesus. One day he asked her: "Tell me, why are you so different?" She gave no long explanation but said: "It is through Jesus, doctor!" This made him inquisitive. He wanted to know more about Jesus. So he got a New Testament and discovered how wonderfully prophecy has been fulfilled. He became a sincere believer in his Messiah and Saviour Jesus.

God says: "I WILL PROVOKE THEM TO JEALOUSY!" For that very purpose we received Jesus into our lives. The name Jesus means "Saviour" ***"Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins"*** (Matthew 1:21). Paul says that salvation has come to the gentiles to provoke the Jews to jealousy! (Romans 11:11)

They will say:

"What happened to them? How could their life be so changed? This could not happen by their own will-power. There is a new Spirit within them. Indeed, they have found the answer in Jesus! I wish to find Him too!"

Yes, God has given a great responsibility and vocation to all gentiles who know the Saviour. He will work through them to provoke the Jews to jealousy. Like Paul let us say,

"Lord, if you will provoke them to jealousy, then I will too. Please do it through me!"
"I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them." *Romans 11:13-14*

Paul wished to save them by all means. Love is inventive. It will find a way, some new method to bring salvation to the Jews (I Corinthians 9:20-22). Today we have more possibilities than Paul ever had: think of the many tracts, Christian books, tapes, radio programs, films. The question is: Are we willing to use these means? Or rather, are we willing to be used by God to fit into His program to provoke the Jews to jealousy?

Dear friend in the Lord, God says: "I WILL PROVOKE THE JEWS TO JEALOUSY!" How can the Lord do this? The apostle Paul says: "Lord, use me! that by any means I may provoke them to jealousy!" May I ask you: "Are you also prepared to make God's will your own?" Then pray: "Lord, take my life and make of me a Christian who will provoke the Jews to jealousy!"

God expects our help in His great plan to bring salvation (Jesus) to the Jewish people, and He beseeches us to be equipped for the task. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Paul says:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. *Romans 12:1-2.*

[These are a slightly edited pieces from: *"Must Read - Articles"* off a webpage of: ©1997-2011 Hope Of Israel Baptist Mission, Inc. | PO Box 1700 | Powder Springs, GA 30127 USA; accessed July 2011. http://www.hopeofisrael.net/2011/articles/must_read/take_gospel_to_jew.html ***A List of Most Famous Messianic Jews***; accessed July 2011. http://israel-pro.org/wiki-de/pmwiki.php/Resources/Biographies. ***Introduction to The Collected Writings of Rabbi Isaac Lichtenstein (1824-1909)***; accessed July 2011. http://www.messiahnj.org/bio-lichtenstein.htm. ***Why I Believe that Yeshua is the Jewish Messiah: The Story of Rabbi Isaac Lichtenstein***; accessed July 2011. http://www.messiahnj.org/bio-lichtenstein.htm. ***"ISRAEL MY GLORY"*** *Israel's Mission, and Missions to Israel* by John

Wilkinson The Founder and Director of the Mildmay Mission to the Jews; accessed July 2011. http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/BooksoftheBible/ISRAELMYGLORYbyJohnWilkinson1894/tabid/435/Default.aspx]

Reasons Why We Should Take the Gospel to Jewish People

+ Because we have all received knowledge of God and salvation from the Jewish people.

"Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews." John 4:22

+ Because there is a blessing for those who bless the descendants of Abraham and a curse on those who curse them.

"Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Genesis 12:1-3

+ Because the Lord is jealous for Zion and angry with those who have persecuted the Jewish people.

". . . Thus saith the LORD of hosts; I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy. And I am very sore displeased with the heathen [that are] at ease: for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction." Zechariah 1:14-15

+ Because the priority of evangelism in the New Testament is to the Jewish people. **

Rom 1:16 KJV - For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

+ Because God's heart is for their salvation.

Romans 10:1 KJV - Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

+ Because God's chosen method of reaching them is the preaching of the gospel.

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!" Romans 10:14-15

+ Because the Jewish people are being restored to the land of Israel in fulfillment of Bible prophecy in preparation for their spiritual rebirth.

Ezekiel 36:24-25 "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you."

+ Because a time of great troubles lies ahead from which only the Messiah Jesus can bring salvation.

Jeremiah 30:7 “Alas! for that day [is] great, so that none [is] like it: it [is] even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it.”

Zechariah 12:10 KJV - And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for [his] only [son], and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for [his] firstborn.

+ Because these events are a sign that we are living in the last days of this age during which time God will move among Jewish people.

And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. . . . Then He (Jesus) spoke to them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near.” Luke 21:24, 29-30

+ Because God’s purpose is to bring the elect remnant of Israel to salvation.

And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: “The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.” Romans 11:26-27

+ Because they are Christ's brethren according to the flesh.

This is repeated for emphasis. We need to really let this truth sink in. Jesus was indeed a Jew. According to the record of God's infallible Word: "of whom (Israel) as concerning the flesh Christ came" (Romans 9:5).

+ Because they are lost.

Romans 3:9; 6:23. Christ told the Jews of His day that they would die in their sins unless they believed that He was the Messiah (John 8:24). The way of the Cross is the only way home for Jew as well as Gentile. What a fallacy it is to take the attitude that we have our "religion" and the Jews have theirs, and we should leave each other alone! The stark, sad truth is that the Jew without Christ is LOST!

+ Because Christ died for them (as well as for us).

Isaiah 53:6, and Romans 10:4, 11-13. Are we constrained by His dying love to witness only to the Gentile? Surely not, for that precious blood was shed as much for Jews as for us.

+ Because God wants them to be saved.

II Peter 3:9 If we really want to be "in the center of God's will" we will be soul winners, because He is not willing that any should perish. If we by-pass the Jew, we are that much off-center as far as His good and perfect will is concerned.

+ Because Christ commands us to witness to them.

Mark 16:15 Our marching orders are both explicit and all-inclusive. When our Captain commanded us to witness for Him to all the world, He meant just that. This includes the Jew, as well as the Gentile.

+ Because they are especially precious to God.

Genesis 12:3, and Zechariah 2:8. This great truth neither condones Israel's sins, nor minimizes God's boundless love for Gentiles as well. But the fact remains that in His sovereignty, He has chosen the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for a special token of His affection. As children of our Heavenly Father in Christ, what is our attitude toward those who are the "apple of His eye?"

+ Because they gave us the Word of God.

Romans 3:1-2 Fellow Gentile-Christian, have you ever stopped to think that, humanly speaking, we would have no Bible had the Jews not written it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit? Are we not their debtors, indeed?

+ Because a Jewish missionary died to give us the gospel.

Galatians 2:8, and 2 Timothy 4:6-8 Paul, the greatest of missionaries, was a Jew. He had a love for lost Gentiles that caused him to burn out his life giving them the gospel - the "good news" that a Jewish Christ had died for our sins and risen for our justification! Are we grateful? Do we show it?

+ Because they will yet conduct the greatest worldwide crusade for Christ.

Matthew 24:14 with Revelation 7:1-14 The shadows are lengthening and deepening as this age rushes toward its predicted end, to wind up in unprecedented evil and feel the unprecedented wrath of God in the "great tribulation." We believe the true Church, the Body and Bride of Christ, will be raptured before the judgment-stroke falls. Then the task of preaching the gospel will revert to Israel. And, from Revelation 7, it is evident they will do a masterful job for Christ! Perhaps you and I might have the inestimable privilege of winning some of these future evangelists to Christ if we would only witness to the Jews as we should!

+ Because they are central in the earthly kingdom to be set up by Christ when He returns as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

It would take pages just to cite the many prophecies relating to the time of Israel's glorification. Let it suffice for the present purpose simply to state that they will then be the leading nation, and Jerusalem the world-capital, when our Christ personally takes over the reins of the government of the world at His glorious return. Brethren, it is an honor to witness to anyone for the KING OF KINGS, but especially to give the "good news" to His chosen people!

+ Because they are increasingly eager for the gospel of Christ.

Romans 11:23-27 As the Church-age draws toward its close, and the time approaches for Israel's purging and restoration (the “day of Jacob's trouble” the “great tribulation”), their “blindness in part” is beginning to give way to light, and Jews are more and more willing to listen to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Should we not be alert to take

advantage of every opportunity to make Him known to them? Many Jews of our acquaintance may be far more anxious to hear the story than we dare hope!

+ Because Gentile Christendom has tragically neglected and ignored the plain injunction of Romans 1:16.

"The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Gentile)." The fact that Gentile Christians in general seem prone to reverse this Divine pronouncement (if indeed the Jew is sought at all), should only serve to spur on to greater endeavor those of us whose spiritual eyes the Holy Spirit has graciously opened. All about us the fields are white unto harvest, both at home and abroad. The laborers are indeed few, but we sometimes wonder if there is a needier or more neglected field than the children of Israel, God's own chosen people! May it please the Lord of the harvest to awaken more of His people to the greatness and importance of this task of getting the precious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to lost Jews throughout the world.

+ Because that by greater zeal, activity and sacrifice the coming of Christ can be hastened.

Note: "I have already shown that there are three stages to the kingdom, the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear, Mark 4:26-28. We do recognize the present, or blade stage, but we do not ignore the millennial stage as some do. The kingdom exists today in the person of the King, Christ, and the ruling class He is now calling out. But that over which we are to reign is yet future, for flesh and blood doth not inherit the kingdom of God. We must first be resurrected. This is just more proof that the first resurrection in Rev. 20:5-6 is the resurrection of the bodies of the saints." --Excerpt from ***"The Millennial Issue"*** by Elder G. E. Jones, c. 1950.

"We conclude, if Christ's second and glorious Advent is waiting upon the Gospel being published among all nations as a witness by the instrumentality of the churches, then this makes clear an inexplicable passage as it stands in our Common Version: 'Looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God.' (2Peter 3:12.) What a powerful incentive to push forward the missionary enterprise on the part of those who love and earnestly desire the Presence of the blessed Lord once more upon this earth!" --- ***"A People Must Be Prepared."*** by J. R. Graves.

+ Because the Lord and King will remove a New Testament churches candlestick.

As the office of His Holy Spirit in all kingdom activities (John 14:23-26; Acts 1:4-7,8;2:1-4,16-19; Revelation 2:5); this effectively leaves each member shut out (Matthew 25:10-13), cast out (Matthew 22:11-14) and beaten with stripes accordingly: thus He will burn up (Matthew 13:30) or "will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers" those that do not love Him (Luke 12:46-49; 2Timothy 4:4-7,8; John 14:15-18) ***and His people*** (Matthew 25:44-46), at the Judgment seat of Christ (1Peter 4:15-19) on His Return (Luke 12:31-53; 1Corinthians 3:13-16).

*** NOTE: In our LORD'S final commands & warnings for those who are to **"occupy"** His kingdom,(Luke 19:13; Revelation 2 & 3) in what we nowadays would call a "Risk Assessment / Management / Missions" statement(or maybe a "State of the Union" address); He said, and in order of priority, I believe, FIRST:* **"Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou**

hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent." *-- Rev. 2:4-5. Isn't it obvious that Israel is His **"First Love"**? Shouldn't we love what He loves and hate what He hates? Maybe it's high time to reevaluate our Jewish outreach programs--if we have any. YA THINK???*

~ ~ ~

After~During~Before Words

Isaiah 4:2-6

"In that day shall the branch of the LORD be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth *shall be* excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. *{beautiful...: Heb. beauty and glory } {them...: Heb. the escaping }* And it shall come to pass, *that he that is* left in Zion, and *he that* remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, *even* every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem: *{among...: or, to life }* When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory *shall be* a defence. *{upon all: or, above all } {defence: Heb. covering }* And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." - *The Authorized King James Bible*

In Yom Hahu *(that day)* shall the Tzemach Hashem be beautiful and glorious *[See the word "kavod," Isaiah 11:10]*, and the p'ri ha'aretz shall be the ga'on *(pride)* and glory for them that are escaped *[see the word she'ar remnant, Isaiah 11:11]* of Yisroel. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Tziyon, and he that remaineth in Yerushalayim, shall be called kadosh, even every one that is hakatuv lachayyim *(recorded for life....Rosh Hashana theme, see Shemot; Exodus 32:32; Tehillim; Psalms 69:28; Daniel 12:1; Malachi 3:16)* in Yerushalayim: When Adonoi shall have washed away the filth of the Banot Tziyon, and shall have purged the dahm of Yerushalayim from the midst thereof by the Ruach Mishpat, and by the Ruach Ba'er *(Spirit of Burning)*. And Hashem will create upon the whole place of Mt Tziyon, and upon her assemblies, an anan and smoke by yom, and the shining of a flaming eish by lailah; for upon all the kavod shall be a Chuppah. And there shall be a Sukkah for a shade in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain. - *The Orthodox Jewish Bible*